~~27.1.25~~

25 Feb 1925

over
Back

d/b

(In report 1925)

SCS #1283

JCS #1283

25-6 27-1-25.

A BRIEF REFUTATION OF THE ERRORS OF Toleration, Erastianism, Independency AND Separation.

Delivered in some

SERMONS

From 1 *Joh.* 4. 1. Preach'd in the Year 1652.

To which are Added

Four Sermons

Preach'd on several Occasions.

By Mr: *James Fergusson*,
Late Minister of the Gospel at *Kilwinning*.

A

EDINBURGH,
Printed by *George Mosman*, and are to be Sold at his Shop in the *Parliament Close*,
Anno Domini MDCXCII.

A REFUTATION
OF THE
ERRORS
OF
POPERY,
AND
SERMONS.

TO THE HONOURABLE

Mr. Francis Montgomery

OF

GIFFINE.

HONOURED SIR,

SO soon as I resolved upon the Publication of the following Papers, I fixed on You as the only Person to whom they should be Addrest: And indeed, whether I look on the Author, or on my Self, I conceive I was many wayes Obliged so to do.

For as to the Author: You are a Worthy Branch of the

Noble *and* Ancient FAMILY of EGLINTOUN, *whereof* God *had given* Him *the peculiar* Charge *and* Overſight *in the* Ordinary Courſe *of his* Miniſtry: *A* Family *which (as Himſelf ſomewhere teſtifies) were his great Encouragers in going about all the parts of his* Function, with Joy and not with Grief; *and for which he had ſent up many* Fervent Prayers *to the* Throne *of* Grace, *of the Effects whereof* You *your* Self *are (Bleſſed be* God*) yet a living* Inſtance. *It was to that* Noble Patriot *and* Zealous Inſtrument *of Our late* Reformation, Your Grand-

Father, *and to the* Noble Earl Your Father (*then Lord* Montgomery) *and to* Your *most* Examplarly Pious *and* Religious Mother, *That the* Author *did* Dedicate *his* Expoſition *of the Epiſtles to the* Galatians *and* Epheſians; *And as all who have the* Honour *to know* You, *are glad to ſee* You *ſo* Naturally *trace the* Religious Example *of* Your Honourable Predeceſſors, *in* Your *firm Adhering to* Your Principles, *and* Purity *of* Religion, Your Encouraging *of* Piety *and Perſons* Pious, Your *Streight, Sincere and Upright* Deportment *towards All* (*a*

Quality as Eminent in that Noble Earl *Your* Grandfather, *as rare in this Generation) so I nothing doubt, but that if it had pleased* God *to have spared the* Author, *to Publish any other of his* Works, *He would have looked upon Your self, as the most Proper person, to whom he should Present them.*

As for my self: Your *Respect to the* Author's *Memory with your undeserved kindness to all his* Relations, *and to my Self in particular, Do strongly oblige me to take all Occasions for testifying my* Thankful Acknowledgements. *And I presume I can scarce*

give

give You a more Acceptable Testimony *of my* Gratitude, *than the presenting You with the ensuing* Papers, *which tho the Publication be posthumous, yet I hope a serious perusal of them, will be sufficient to supersede any further* Commendation: *And indeed my near Relation to the* Author, *will not allow me to speak either of* Him *or his* Works, *what perhaps others might: And therefore without giving* You *any further trouble, but Commending* You *and* Your Vertuous Lady *to the* Protection *of the* Almighty; *And Wishing, That as* God *has blessed* You *with an* Hopeful off-spring,

who are as so many Living Images *of* your selves; *in whom you see your own* Lives *renewed, & who by Their* Good Enclinations, *do already give us cause to expect the best of Them; So You and They may live together, till You see Them prove a* Comfort *unto You; And that after You are gone, They may be no less Useful in Their* Generation, *than now You are; I shall humbly crave leave to subscribe my self in all duty,*

Honoured Sir,
Your most obliged, and most
humble Servant,

JAMES FERGUSSON.

TO THE READER.

THere are divers years past, since the Reverend, Learned, and Pious Author of the following Discourses, fell a sleep in the Lord, and is gone to receive the fruit of his Labours, from the chief Shepherd of the Sheep: Yet we have in his Memory a lasting proof of the Truth of that Word, *Pro.* 10. 7. *The memory of the Just is Blessed.* And that of *Psalm* 112. 6---*The Righteous shall be in everlasting Remembrance*: Their memory is Precious and Honourable: For I can truly say, though I have heard many, of high and low Degree speak of Master *Fergusson*, I never heard any make mention of him but with Honour and Respect, As a Man of great Piety and Learning, and Eminent for Prudence and Moderation. And I am confident, there will be no need of

Epiſtles of Recommendation, for any of his Works, to any who either knew Himſelf, or have peruſed his Judicious and Pious Treatiſes, publiſhed already, on the Epiſtles to the *Galatians*, *Epheſians*, *Philippians*, *Coloſſians* and *Theſſalonians*. Nor am I ſo preſumptuous, as to imagine my Teſtimony could raiſe the Eſteem of any thing done by ſo Famous and Worthy a Man: But being his Mediate Succeſſor to the Pariſh of *Kilwinning*, where he did for many years Labour in the Work of the Goſpel; and being deſired by his Son of the ſame Name, I could not deny to expreſs the eſteem I have for his Memory, Though I had not the Advantage of knowing him while he lived.

I am informed the following Diſcourſes, were the ſubject of Divers *Sermons*, delivered to that People, in a time when there was much need of Warning; It was after that through a *Boundleſs Tolleration*, a deludge of Errors had broken in upon *England*, and the *Sectarian Army* having Subdued *Scotland*, and diſperſed themſelves in all the Parts of it, Corrupt Men and Seducers among Them, did endeavour to pervert the People from

from the Truth: Then it was (*anno* 1652.) When this worthy Author, as a Faithful Watchman, gave to his Flock Warning of the Danger; And that they might be rooted and grounded in the Truth, did represent to them the necessity of a sound and well-informed Judgement, in order to Holiness and Salvation; and for that end did excite and direct them to *Try the Spirits;* and afterward, for their further Instruction and establishment in the Truth, took notice of some particular *Errors*, by which they seem'd to be in greatest hazard at that time; and did in a plain and convincing way, Refute the *Errors*, and Confirm the Truth, making alwayes some Practical Improvement of what he had delivered.

Although the Reverend Author was known to be a great Master of School-learning, and was invited to be *Professor of Divinity* in the Famous University of *Glasgow* (which yet he humbly refused) yet he did not calculate these Discourses for the School or Court; But being to speak to a Countrey Congregation, wherein were many Common People (for whom they seem to have been intirely designed, since the

Author

Author could never be induced to Publish them in his own time) He had such a sense of the holy Apostles example 1 *Cor.* 14. 18, 19, that he choosed to speak to the edification of the meanest; and he had a peculiar faculty of making things intricate, plain and easie to be understood. And I am confident that those who are not for pleasing their fancy with fine notions, or their ear with jingling words, but desire to have their judgement informed, and their conscience satisfied, will find here that which will be very edifying: For his endeavour is, That Controversies be clearly stated; And with great perspicuity and solidity doth he confirm the Truth by Scripture and Reason, and confute the contrary Error; and all this without bitterness or wrath, but with such calmness and moderation of Spirit, wherein he did excell; So that (as I am informed) divers of the *English* Army, though of a contrary Judgement, did resort to hear him; I know not what effects his Teaching of these Truths had on Them, but by the Blessing of God, these of his own Flock were so established in the Truth, that not one of them was seduced from it. And I cannot but record it to the

praise

praise of God and commendation of that Congregation, and for the encouragement of any who may be invited to be their Pastor, when I, to their and my grief, am to be separated from them, to a more difficult Post; I say, I cannot but record it, that as that Congregation of *Kilwinning*, hath since the Reformation, been blest with eminent learned and pious Men, Mr *Glasford*, Mr *Baillie*, Mr *Fergusson* and Mr *Rogirs*; So they have by the Blessing of God on their labours, been kept not only Sound in the Faith, but United among themselves, when others have been wofully Divided: And they have alwayes shewed a great love to the Gospel, and all the Ordinances of the Lord *Jesus*, and the Ministers thereof: And I pray *That their fruit may abound more and more.*

If some Expressions Concerning the Opinion of *Independents*, or *Congregational* Men, seem severe; It would be remembred, that the Author doth not speak against Persons, but against Things; And in a time when many Errors followed that Division about Church Government; and the Debate was hot about it, and fear that it should have taken place in *Scotland*: But considering the Zeal these of *New-Eng-*

England have discovered against *Error*, and their United way of acting in *Association* and *Synods*, when they think there is need, and the love that hath been in time of Common Tryal, and the Late Essay which hath been made for an *Accomodation*, betwixt *Presbyterians* and Them in *England*; I suppose if our Reverend Author had lived until this time, he would have concluded, the Difference may be so lessened, that it need not hinder their walking together, in that wherein they are agreed, nor their Endeavours to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*.

I do not know of any particular design of publishing these Discourses now, when they have been kept hid for fourty years, but that the Author's Son having long delay'd and declin'd to Publish them, though frequently and seriously advis'd to do it by many, he was advertised that some would publish the Imperfect Notes received from His mouth, in the time of Hearing, which being incorrect, might not only prejudge the Authors name, but the Truth, and others Edification. If these (as is hoped they will) be acceptable and useful, what yet remains unprinted of these Discourses, may see the Light in due time.

There

to the Reader:

Thete are here ſubjoyned *Four Sermons* of the Reverend Author, which the Publiſher and others hope may be found of good uſe, and may make way for the communicating more of his Pious and Judicious Sermons, which are longed for by them who knew Him, or his other Works.

It had ſurely been of great advantage to the Church, had it pleaſed God to have ſpared this judicious and pious Author till now, and that he had publiſhed more of his Works in his own time: But ſeing our infinitely wiſe and good God hath diſpoſed otherwiſe, it becometh us to ſubmit: But if by this, or any other of his Works, God get Glory, and the Church be edified; The Publiſher will rejoice and bleſs God, as having atrained his end. And if the Reader peruſe his Works with the ſame Spirit wherewith they ſeem to be ſpoken and written, I am confident he will not fail of profit.

Now that the Spirit of Truth and Holineſs, would lead Thee and all His people, into all Truth, and help them to edify one another in love, and thar He would bleis His Churches with Truth and Peace, and ſend out many

Faith-

Faithful Labourers into His Harveſt with a double meaſure of the Spirit that was in Mr. *Fergusſon* and other eminently holy Men who then lived, ſhall be the Prayer of,

Chriſtian Reader,

Edinburgh, *June* 1692. *Thy Souls cordial Well-wiſher.*

George Meldrum.

The

The Contents.

SECT. I.

OF Doctrine in general, and the Tryal thereof: Being some Doctrines raised from the Text, Introductorie to the main purpose. Pag. 1. ad 26.

Doctr. I. Error *is to be Eschewed.* pag. 3.

Doctr. II. *Orthodoxy, or a Right opinion in the matters of Truth, is as much to be studied as Holiness of Life.* pag. 5.

Doctr. III. *As at all times, so chiefly when there is danger of spreading of* Error, *there is most need that Love should be intertain'd betwixt Pastor and People: Where are some directions for a Ministers carriage, in order to the keeping of the affections of his People, while he is Refuting their* Errors. pag. 12.

Doctr. IV. *The Spirit of* Error *began very early to trouble the Church. Where are some Reasons for which the Lord suffers* Errors *to spread.* pag. 16.

Doctr. V. *The foulest* Errors *go out oftentimes under fairest Names, and are backed with most specious Pretences.* pag. 19.

Doctr. VI. *When foul* Error *is holden out under fair*

 names

names, and backed with fair pretences, there is a danger left People drink them in and believe them. Where are 5 *things that speak this hazard.* pag. 23.

Doctr. VII. *Ministers the Servants of God are not to clap Peoples heads, or to indulge them in this inclination of* Theirs *to* Error, *but on all hazards they are to testify against it: Where are* 3 *Reasons for which People ought to reverence much what warnings of this kind are given by Ministers.* pag. 28.

Doct. VIII. *It is not Gods Way That People, because there are differences about Religion, should therefore believe no Religion: Where are* 5 *Directions for the unlearned to walk by, in order to difference of opinions among the Learned.* pag. 31.

Doctr. IX. *How fair soever the pretence is that a Doctrine is coloured with, It should not be taken upon Trust, but must be brought to a Tryal. Where are some Directions how to walk betwixt Popish Tyranny, and Sectarian Confusion.* pag. 34.

Doctr. X. *The right* Tryal *to be taken of Doctrines preached, or any otherwise vented is,* To try whether they be of God *or not. Where is shown what is requisite to a Doctrine, that it may be said to be* Of God. pag. 38.

Doctt. XI. *There are many Doctrines pretending to the Spirit, which yet being brought to the* Touchstone *will be found* Not to be of God. p. 44

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Doctrine of Toleration *Try'd, and found not to be* Of God. *Wherein, as in all the* Errors *following, First, The Question is Stated. 2. Arguments are brought for Confirming the Truth, and vindicated from the Opposites Exceptions. 3. The Opposites Objections are Answered, and Refuted from Scripture and Reason. 4. The Truth being vindicated, is applyed to a Practical Use.* pag. 47.

SECT. III.

The Doctrine of Erraſtianiſm *Try'd, and found not to be* Of God. pag. 86.

Head *I. There is a Church Government held forth in Scripture.* ibid.

Head *II. The power of Church Government belongeth not to the Civil Magiſtrate.* pag. 103

SECT. IV.

The Doctrine of Independency *Try'd, and found not to be* Of God. pag. 123.

Head *I. The power of Church Government is in the Church Officers, and not in the Body of Church Members.* ibid.

Head. *II. The highest power of Church Government is not in Church Seſſions, or Congregational Elderſhips.* pag. 150.

Paragr. *I. There is a Plat-form of the Government of many Congregations, by One Common Presbytry holden out in Scripture,* pag. 152.

Paragr. *II. There is a Plat-form of Government by*

by Synods over many particular Presbytries held forth in Scripture: pag. 167.
Paragr. *III. Inferior Church Judicatories are subject to Superior.* pag. 173.

SECT. V.

The Doctrine of Separation *Try'd, and found* Not to be of God. pag. 191
Head *I. Shewing what is required for making one a Member of the Visible Church.* ibid
Head *II. No* Separation *from a true Church, or Gods Worship in the Church, because of the Sins of Fellow-worshipers.* pag. 214
A Sermon *Preach'd before the Synod at* Glasgow, *April* 5. 1653. *From* 1 Cor: 1. 10. pag. 235.
Sermon *Second Preach'd at* Irving, *from* Psalm 51: 6: *Immediatly before the Giving of the Communion, Being a* Preparation Sermon *in order thereto.* pag. 287
Sermon *Third Preach'd at* Kilwinning 11 *May* 1663 *From* Luke 7. 23. *Upon the Munday, Immediatly after the Giving of the Communion.* pag. 313.
Sermon *Fourth, Preach'd at* Kilwinning, *From* Acts 11: 23. *Upon the Munday Immediatly after the Giving of the Communion.* pag. 340.

A BRIEF REFUTATION OF THE ERRORS OF Tolleration, &c.

SECT. I.

Of Doctrine in General, and the Tryal thereof.

1 John ch. 4. ver. 1.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God.

THE Body of this Epistle, as we shew'd when first we entred upon the handling of it, runs upon *three* Heads: The *first* is upon Marks whereby to discern real Grace, *to wit*, who had it, and who not. The

second runs upon Exhortations to several Duties of Sanctification; chiefly, Love to the Brethren, that Christians would Love them that Love God, Love Grace wherever they saw it. The *third* Head whereon it runs is, Exhortations to Constancy, in avowing Truth against Error.

In this fourth Chapter there are two of these Heads, according to which we may take up the Chapter in two parts. In the First, There is an Exhortation to stand by Truth, and to beware of those who would seduce People from it: And that to *ver.* 7. In the second part, There is a renewing of the former Exhortations, *To Love the Brethren*: And a Confirmation of it, by a number of new Arguments, to the end: Both which have been handled already, and yet the Apostle returns again to them, because Exhortations against Error cannot be enough inculcate, and therefore he reiterats them again and again.

In the first part of this Chapter, There is, 1. An Exhortation. 2. There are Arguments to enforce the Exhortation. The Exhortation is set down in the former part of the first verse, *Believe not every Spirit*, that is, lend not an Ear to every point of Doctrine covered over with a fair Name, but bring every Doctrine to the Touch-stone. There are two Things considerable in this Exhortation; First, There is the compellation he gives them, a warm and kindly Stile, *Beloved*; And then *Secondly*, There is the Exhortation it self: And in it there are two Things. 1. What they should not do. And 2. What they should do. For the *First*, What they should not do.

Be-

Believe not every Spirit. Some take the Spirit here for Preacher, *Believe not every Preacher.* And some for Doctrine, *Believe not every Doctrine*: But both may well be joyned together thus, *Believe not every Preacher who pretends the Spirit for his Doctrine.* For the *second*, What they should do; It is to *Try the Spirits whether they are of God.* He bids them not cast at all Doctrines, because there are some Errors vented for Truths, as the natural Heart is ready to do: But he Exhorts, that they would bring every Spirit to the right Touch stone. Thus much for opening up the words.

We intend (if the Lord give us liberty) to speak somewhat largely on this Verse of those Doctrines or Errors which are most like to trouble our Church; therefore we shall raise some Doctrines before hand, which may make way for what we intend.

Doct. I. The First is, from the Apostles dehorting Believers from false Doctrine; by many Arguments. Hence observe, That Christians would by all means eschew any thing that may tend to seduce them from the pure Truths of *Jesus Christ*; Particularly, that they would beware of Error; Herely, and any thing of that sort: Hence there are so many Exhortations in Scripture, to stand by the Truth, to be rooted in the Faith, and to eschew contrary Error: So it is a Duty lying on Christians, to be guarding and watching against Error, or what is contrary to Truth.

Reas. The Reason is, because Errour is a Sin, and a very dangerous one. We shall shew the danger of

it in three Things: I. It is dangerous, because of the desert of it; It is Damnable. 2 *Peter* 2. 1. False Prophets are spoken of there as those who *bring in damnable Heresies*, that is highly, condemnable: We shall afterwards show in what respect Heresies are Damnable. 2. Errours are dangerous Sins, because they steal subtily in upon People, and people do too readily relish them: So there are many whose nature abhorres gross Sins against the second Table, as Fornication and such like; and yet the Devil gets them hooked, by this sin of *Error*: Nature is born with a cry against gross Sins committed against the second Table, and so naturally there is some kind of loathing in People at them; but it is not so in the sins of *Error*: *Sathan* can transform himself into an Angel of Light, and plead Conscience, whereas he intends to bear down *Truth*: So the sins of Error are dangerous, because subtile. 3. They are dangerous in this respect, that as they creep easily in; So when once they are in, it's hard to get them shut to the door again: And that because deluded Conscience pleads for them. People tainted with *Error* think themselves right, and therefore whatever is brought against them, Conscience casts at all as wrong. Now in other Sins, *to wit*, such as are against the Second Table, altho Affection plead for them, yet usually Peoples Light does witness against them: And so in this respect, it is more hard to get a sin of *Error* thrust out, where it is once rooted, than the sin of *Prophanity* it self.

Use This Doctrine may serve to fit you for re-

ceiv

ceiving the following *Doctrines* (which if the Lord will, we are to speak of) tending to the Refutation of divers *Errors*. *Error* in *Doctrine* is a subtile temtation, the temtation of the time, a dangerous temptation; because it hath now many advantages to plead for it. Now if the Lord shall bless the following Discourses, they may prove an Antidote against it: And what we have now said, shews how great need ye have to guard against it: It is a dangerous Sin, and so ye had need to be armed against it.

Doct. II. Again, a general Doctrine arriseth from the connexion of this Chapter with the preceeding; In the preceeding, the Apostle hath been all alongs stirring up Christians to Sanctification of Life, to eschew Prophanity, here he subjoyns an Exhortation to cleave to the *Truth*. Which gives us this Obeservation, That an Orthodox Judgement, or a right Opinion in the matters of *Truth* is as much to be studied as Sanctification of Life, and the contrary of them both is equally to be eschewed: That is to say, a Child of God is bound to guard himself, and to watch as much against *Heresy* and *Error*, in the matter of Opinion, as against Prophanity and gross Sins in the matter of Practise. We had need to clear this, because there is a conceit in People, whereby they are ready to think, that for the matter of Opinion, it makes not much what men be, many that have *Error* may have Grace, Grace and *Error*, say they, are consistent: And so if men live well it matters not much what be their Opinion. We grant indeed every *Error* does not destroy Grace, and Grace is con-

sistent with some Errors, yet every Error does in so much weaken the work of Grace within a man. And *secondly*, Error is consistent with Grace as other damSins are; as *David's* Adultery was consistent with Grace. And that is the point to be proven, That Error in the matter of Doctrine is as much to be abhorred by the Child of God, as gross Sins in the matter of their Practice.

Reas. We shall bring several things to clear this Truth to you, and the first is this; Scripture doth equally discharge both: It is as much in guarding against Error as Prophanity. So in Hebr. 13, 9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange Doctrines: For it is a good thing that the Heart be established with Grace*: and in Colos. 2. 8. *Bewar lest any man spoil you through Philosophy*----We need not insist to multiply Scriptures to this purpose; any that are acquaint with Scripture (especially the Epistles of the new Testament) will find Exhortations against Error to be as pressing as against any sin else.

Secondly, as Scripture discharges both alike, *so it* aggravates the sin of Error as much as the sin of Prophanity. There is nothing almost that Scripture brings to aggravate gross sins against the second Table, but it uses the same to aggravate Error: In the Epistle to the *Gallat.* 5. 19. *Adultery*, *Fornication Lasciviousness*, &c. are called *the works of the Flesh*: An odious name: But in *ver.* 20 *Heresy* gets the same name also, and is rekoned up amongst the works of the Flesh. So in the Epistle to the Colos. 2, 18. a superstitious mind is called, *a fleshly mind.*

Let

Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility. And worshiping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puft up by his fleshly mind. And both get one name. Thus in 1 *Peter.* 2.11. *If fleshly lusts* be aggravated from this that *they fight against the Soul*, they are soul destroying sins: So Heresy and Error are branded with a worse name in the 2 Peter 2. 1---*who privily bring in damnable Heresies.* Heresy is damnable a soul destroying sin, not for this respect only that they deserve Damnation; For the meanest sin of Infirmity is damnable that way, in it self it merits damnation: therefore this Scripture must mean somewhat more when it calls Heresy damnable, than to rank it amongst our ordinary infirmities: Neither are they called damnable in that sense as if the Soul guilty of Heresy could not be saved; For many Hereticks have repented unto Salvation: But they are called damnable sins, as other gross sins are called damnable; that is to say justly and highly Condemnable: They are damnable because they marr the work of Grace, they marr the thriving of Grace, the lively acts of Grace; even as *Davids* Adultery, (so long as he lay under it) did.

Reas. 3 There is a third Reason to prove this point and it is this; Stability of the heart in Grace, and stability of the mind in Truth, stand and fall together: So that upon the mind's wavering in the matters of Truth, the heart will begin to waver in the matter of Grace also: Prophanity followeth upon Error, Error received and imbraced oftentimes endeth in

Pro-

Prophanity at the last: And therefore it should equally be watched against with Prophanity it self. Now to make what we have said appear *viz.* That *Error* in the matter of *Truth*, and *Prophanity* against Holiness of Life, usually go along together: Ye would first look to Experience, Experience makes this good, that *Error* for the most part ends in a prophane Godless Life; Scripture experience clears it, So the Apostle *Jude* describes these Hereticks he speaks of to be vile Livers: And later than Scripture Experience makes this good also, That *Error* and *Prophanity*, for the most part, follow hard upon the heels one of another: It's true *Sathan* ensnares People at the first to *Error*, by a pretence of leading them to a more strick way than others: But the thing he is aiming at is still more looseness. Ye need not seek a more clear proof than what ye see before your Eyes: Did ever ye see a more Godless company of men than divers of those Hereticks amongst us, who were first drawn on to *Error*, by a pretence of walking after a more strict way of Holiness than others? They could not joyn in worship with the *Presbyterians* (many in their Churches were so prophane as they pretended) but would gather Churches of their own, and would Joyn with none but those that had evident signs of Grace; and so came of it. They would be stricter than God would have them, and therefore many of them have turn'd so abominably loose And so Experience aboundantly clears that *Error* and *Prophanity* do follow hard one upon another; But we shall clear it also from Scripture:

And

And our first proof is from those Scriptures holding forth That *Error* in the matter of *Doctrine* hath usually its rise from some unmortifyed Lust within which makes way for such an *Error So Rom*: 16, 17. 18.----*I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* Now from whence come these divisions contrary to the right Doctrine? *v.* 18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly: and by good words and fair Speaches deceive the hearts of the simple.* Unmortified corruptions within bloweth wind in their sails, so the root of *Korah Dathan* and *Abiram's* Error whereby they laboured to bear down Magistracy and Ministry was an unmortified root of pride within them; They had a fair pretext for it, a pretext of Liberty; Are not all the Lords People Holy? And may they not rule as well as yee? A fair pretext indeed! but the root was pride: They could not endure to be ruled over, and so they will rule themselves: Thus when *Jeroboam* makes separation from the Church of *Jerusalem* he hath a fair pretext for this 1 *King.* 12, 28---*It is too much* (saith he) *for you to go up to Jerusalem.* There is the pretext; but the root of the matter was a lust within, stirring him up to secure to himself the enjoyment of that which was not his own; and this Ambition breeds fear, that if they go up to *Jerusalem*, to worship, his power would quickly turn to nothing. So *ver.* 27. *If this People go up to do Sacrifice in the house of the Lord at* Jerusalem, *then shall the heart of this People turn again unto*

to their Lord, even unto Rehoboam *King of* Judah, *and they shall kill me.* There is the matter, a desire of Reigning was the cause of his Idolatry and Schism, an unmortified lust within was the root and rise of his Error. And *secondly* Scripture holds out, That as Error is the Daughter of Prophanity, so it is the Mother of prophanity; as it rises from Prophanity so it tends to more Prophanity, Christs words import this *John* 8. 31. *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him; if ye continue in my word then are ye my Disciples indeed,* If ye adhere and keep closs to the Truth, then shall ye attain to walk as my Disciples. And it imports on the other hand, That if ye drink in Error, ye shall not be my Disciples indeed. And so, as Prophanity is the Mother of Error; So it is also the Daughter of Error, This serves to clear the point. That a Child of God should as much watch and guard against Error, as he should do against other gross Sins or prophanity of Life.

For Use, This Doctrine serves for reproof first to those who would have *Tolleration* of all Opinions in the Matter of Religion, and no coercive mean to curb *Error*: And that because, say they, it may curb Piety. Which followes no more than that the suppressing of Fornication will curb Piety, the one is as dangerous as the other, and God's People may fall in the one as well as the other; and therefore the one should be as well curbed as the other. Nay I may say that that which is called *Liberty of Conscience* is the most capital Sin in a Kingdom: It is all one, as if a King would proclaim liberty, to Drink, to Swear,

to

to Whore, and to Steal; for both are alike evil, and where the one is, commonly the other is also: and therefore to proclaim liberty to the one is to proclaim liberty to the other. We think there is no heart zealous of Gods Glory, but should abhorre such a thought as this.

Use 2. *Secondly*, the Doctrine reproves those who think Opinions are free; Many reason thus, If ye lead an Holy Life it matters not what be your Opinion, whether for Presbytery, Independency, Arminianism, Prelacy, or Popery, your Soul is in no hazard, if ye be kept from gross Out breakings; but this Doctrine shewes, this sort of Reasoning to be a gross mistake: For, besides that Error speaks an unmortified root in the Heart. Heresie and Error in themselves are damnable, and are reckoned up among those Sins which debar from the Kingdom of Heaven, *Galat.* 5. verse 21. Hereticks as well as Murderers are excluded, and therefore Folks would not jest and play with matters of Religion, so as not to care what side they be on.

Thirdly, this Doctrine gives another use, as ye would eschew Prophanity of Life; so beware of Errors against the Truth: For the one of those, ends in the other. Grant the Error pretend to much of strictness, the upshot or Issue of it is still to Prophanity; and therefore ye would advise well when tentations to Error are presented, before ye drink in any thing contrary to Truths received, if ye would not have it read in the looseness of your Life afterward. Many whose

Lives

Lives were very ſtrict, when they began firſt to change their Way, were in a ſhort time led by their new Light to a Prophane Godleſs Life.

Uſe 4. *Fourthly*, Seeing *Errors* have their riſe from ſome unmortified root within; therefore as ye would be keeped free from *Error*, ſubdue Corruptions within. We are ready to think that Godleſs Men, will ſtand out beſt againſt *Error*; But it will prove otherwiſe; unmortified Luſts, of any other thing, will prove the greateſt Friends to *Error*, ſuch as a Luſt of Pride to be Eminent; of Covetouſneſs, to get your Arms full of the World run as it will, a Luſt of Lazineſs in Duties that will make you drink in that *Error* that caſts at all Duties as needleſs: So, for an Antidote againſt the works of the Fleſh, (whereof Hereſie is one, *Galat.* 5. verſe 21.) The Crucifying of the Luſts of the Fleſh is brought as one.

Doct. III. We come to the words themſelves, and and therein is to be conſidered, *firſt*, the Stile, *Beloved*, A warm and kindly compellation. The point we are to raiſe is, from comparing the Stile with the Matter which the Apoſtle is about: He is to warn them to beware of *Error*, and yet he gives them a loving Stile, *Beloved believe*, &c. And it gives us this Doctrine, That as at all times, ſo chiefly when there is danger of ſpreading of *Error*, there is moſt need that Love ſhould be entertained betwixt Paſtor and People. So we find *Paul* labours to bear in himſelf on Peoples Affections, eſpecially in *Galat.* 4. ver. 10. and 11. *Ye obſerve Dayes and Months*, &c. *I am afraid*

afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you Labour in vain. There he reproves them for their *Error*, And in the 12 verse he bears in on their Affection, *Brethren, I beseech you be as I am, for I am as ye are, ye have not injured me at all.* And so in the 2 *Corinth.* 12. v. 16. Through the whole Epistle he hath been speaking against their Error, and all along he bears in on their Affection, especially in the place cited. *And I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I loved you, the less I be loved,* &c. Abundance of places shew his practice to have been this way.

The Reason is, *First*, because when People begin to differ, they are ready to cast at these who differ from them, chiefly, those who would curb them: For there is still a Spirit of Pride with *Error*, it cannot endure to be contradicted, or, the least thing to be spoken to its own prejudice if not all the more warily, it will foam and rage, and if it cannot bear down the contrary Truth, yet it will labour to bear down him that speaks it. So Hereticks are called *Murmurers, Complainers,* Jude *verse* 16. So a Minister in reproving Error, would guard against this danger, lest he do more hurt than profit, and all the Issue of his pains be to work a prejudice against himself.

And *Secondly*, This Argument will be the more strong, considering the evil that comes by prejudice. There is nothing that makes people run faster headlong into Error, than prejudice against Faithful Pastors. Therefore this hath been the Devil's Method,

thod, First, To bear down the Ministry, by making the people first cast at one, then at another, and so at all; that their Ears being once stoped with prejudice at what Ministers say, their Ear may be boared to let in any Error that the Devil or his Instruments pleaseth to vent: Therefore a Minister would make it his Study so to behave himself, that there be no ground of prejudice given by him, but that all his Carriage may savour of a Resolution to entertain Love.

Now because our fear is that Error may spread, and that (if the Lord give us leave) we intend from this Verse to speak to the most infecting Errors: We shall solve this Question, What a Minister is to do for entertaining Love: For clearing of this, we shall first shew what he is not to do; He is not to be silent at Error, for fear of Irritating and losing Affection; That were not Love, considering what is said of the nature of Error: It is all one as if we would not reprove a loose Liver, for fear of angring him. Secondly, Neither is he to speak against them in a Cold-rife manner, as if it were a thing indifferent, whether they return to a right Judgement or not: No, He must (as he would be faithful to God) aggravate the evil of Error to the utmost, declare its hazard, denounce what Scripture pronounceth against it; whether it anger them or not; Better anger and loose them, than anger God.

What then must he do? Answer, As in other sins he must first reprove them, *Levit.* 19. ver. 17. And secondly so reprove, as it may argue Love to the

the person reproved, *Jude* ver. 23. Only there would be this difference betwixt reproving of Error and other sins, Other sins may be inveighed against without pains to convince the person reproved that such are sins, Nature is born with a cry against such; But Error hath an erring Conscience to stand up in its behalf; therefore the most of a Ministers work would be in convincing from the Word, that the thing he holdeth is Error: Otherwise, to inveigh against what he holdeth, without this, will harden him more, he will look on it as the Man's passion, and that he hath nothing to say from Scripture or Reason against what he holdeth.

2. In dealing with erring persons, there would be a difference put betwixt Seducers, and those who are seduced: Those who are rooted in Error, and those who are only Doubters, To *Jude* verse 23.

For Use, Ye may see from this what a great Task Ministers have, and how great need of help there is from people to Ministers in Erring times. In some respect it is harder to deal with one Man tainted with Error, than with twice so many Prophane Livers: A prophane Mans Conscience must readily say the same that we say, and so, keep us at Reverence: But an erring Mans Conscience speaks against us, takes us to Err, and so readily cannot endure us, and yet we must speak, venturing in Gods strength: But there is need so to speak, least in speaking we loose more then we gain.

The next thing that followes is, the Exhortation, *Believe not every Spirit*: That is, do not credit every Doctrine

Doctrine that hath a fair pretence, Or every Preacher that pretends the Name of the Spirit: From this we learn, That the Spirit of Error began very early to trouble the Church, in the primitive times when the Apostles were yet living, there were even then some who contradicted them to their very face; so the averrers of Circumcision, Justification by workes, denyers of the resurrection. *&c.*

Reas: 1. The Reason is first, because the Spirit of *Error* is shameless, it will affront the most convincing evidences; for it is natures Brood, and credit is so engaged in it, that is trampleth upon all that would bear it under, if an Apostle were speaking a *Sectarian* Spirit would out-dare him: It is an affronted and malapert Spirit.

Secondly, The Lord saw it fitting, that in the latter ages of the Church his People should be tryed by erring Spirits, and therefore, he would have the primitive times troubled with them also, that we might be the less troubled; seeing that even the Apostles themselves were not fre'd from such like perplexity, as to have to doe with Spirits of Error. But there is an other Reason why the Lord suffers his Church, both in former times, and in latter times, to be troubled with the Spirit of *Error*, set down in the 1 *Corinth:* 11. *verse* 19. *For there must be also Heresies amongst you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.* There must be Heresies, there is *a must be* put upon it: Now this is not an absolute *necessity*, but a necessity or a *must be* upon the supposition of Gods most wise decree, to permit

and

wise decree, to permit and suffer those things for most wise ends; and the end for which he permitts them to be, is *First*, for the tryal of Persons, and *secondly*, for the tryal of *Truth*. *First*, for the tryal of Persons, this End is set down in the verse cited *Heresies* and *Hereticks* must be, *that they which are aproved may be made manifest among you.* The Spirit of Heresie let loose, hath a discovering efficacy with it, it discovers who are of a humble frame of Spirit, and who are Proud, Lofty, Conceity, and of a Selfish spirit: It discovers who are light, weak, and easily carried away with any thing, *unstable minds*, as the Apostle speaks; and who are more solid, and Ballanced with the Spirit of Sobriety, and solid Wisdom, that is from above. It discovers these who have put a price on *Truth*, that they will *buy it*, but will on no termes *sell it*; and also discovers those who have put no price upon it, or that will suffer little for it: That is the first end why Hereticks must be, to discover Persons and try them. And *secondly*, Hereticks, in the Lords wise Providence, tend to the tryal of *Truths*, and the making of them brighter and clearer, they scoure *Truths*, (so to speak) so that the disputs of Hereticks, and venting of *Error*, make *Truth* the brighter. The more debating there is betwixt these two, *Error* grows the blacker, and *Truth* the clearer. When the Lord hath a mind to have a *Truth* cleared and rooted in his Peoples Spirits, He does in his Infinite Wisdom take this way, a strange way indeed and yet making much for the purpose: He will let some *Error* arise

to oppose the *Truth*, through occasion whereof more light breaks out to the clearing of the *Truth*. These are Reasons why *Hereticks must be.*

Use. The use is, seeing the Spirit of *Error* began so early to trouble the Church in the *Apostles* time, that were guided with an infallible Spirit, then ye are not to wonder that *Error* should trouble the Church now when there are not such infallible lights as these: The Spirit of *Error* is a bold darring Spirit it will dare to contradict God Himself, and find out some shift, to cast at that which God Himself sayeth: As may be seen *Gen:* 3. The Lord said *The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die*: And *Sathan* contradicts it, *thou shalt not surely die.* And so no wonder there be such impudence seen in the Spirit of *Error* now, as to cast at any thing which Gods Servants say, seeing *Satan* still Acts the Instruments of *Error.*

Use. 2. But *secondly*, from this Doctrine learn not to quarrell with Gods most Holy and wise Providence, in that he suffers so many *Errors* to be. We are ready to think that if God had that care of his Church, Covenant and Cause, as men would think he had, he would not suffer such Effronted Spirits, and such Blasphemous Hereticks to prevail, and to outdare his *Truth*: But that is to quarrel the Lords providence and without a ground: He whose furnace is in *Zion* can make all the tryals of the time that arise from *Error* to contribute much for the clearing of *Truth*; by this means he will rouse up his People to study *Truth*, to understand it better, to search out grounds

grounds for it, and that is one advantage; only ye would know also, that these times will be discovering times, they will discover many a corrupt heart, many unstable hearts and light heads, many proud Spirits, and many that have Lusts lurking within them: So that many will choose that Religion that will gratify their Lusts most; For, there is not an *Error* that *Sathan* hatches, but there is one Lust or other within People that speaks for it; and there is nothing more ready to make People take in *Error*, than their harbouring of unmortified Lusts. So in. 2 *Timoth*: *Cap*: 3. The Apostle speaking of those who should be caried away with false Teachers says in the 6. v. *For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins led away with diverse Lusts*: Unmortified Lusts are as fuel to make the fire of Zeal for *Error* to burn very hot in Peoples bosom, and so *Error* will try People this way.

Doct: V. Next observe he sayes *Believe not every Spirit*, that is, believe not every Doctrine that hath the name of the Spirit, and fair pretences put upon it, as if they were the Doctrines of the Spirit of God, believe them not. From this we learn, That the foulest *Errors* go out oftentimes under fairest names, and are backed with most specious pretences, what Fouler Errors than these spoken of here, *The denying of the Son of God*: And yet what fairer Names than the *Spirit*? What fairer pretences than that they are *Doctrines taught by the Spirit of God*? We will find this of all Errors spoken of in Scripture, for the most

part, *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram's* Error whereby they rose up against the Magistracy of *Moses*, and Priest-hood of *Aaron*, hath a fair pretence for it. *Ye take too much upon you Moses and Aaron, are not all the Lords People Holy.* And *Jeroboams* Error, his Idolatry in setting up the Calf at *Dan* and *Bethel*, hath a fair pretence 1 *Kings* 12. *It is too fair for you* &c. The Peoples ease, and the publick good is the thing he pretends though his design was far otherwise: And so these that urged Justification by works, and opposed the way of free Grace, and being justified by Faith, they had their fair pretences: O! say they, to cast off Workes from Justification, will make People secure wee may sin that Grace may abound; very taking pretences all of them, and as taking as any that Error is now covered over with. The Reason of the Doctrine is from the cause for which the Tempter presents Error under fair colours, and specious pretences, which is this; That he may make the Error the more taking: For these are the baits he puts on the hook that he may deceive and catch the simple.

Therefore for use of this Doctrine, ye would not be deceived with fair pretences, or ravishing-like expressions, that Error may be fairded over with: See what the Apostle *Paul* sayes to this purpose 2 *Thess.* cap. 2, v. 2. Where speaking against an Error, *he beseeches them by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, That they be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled, neither by Spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.* It supposes that the spreaders of

of that Error had all these three pretences. *First.* they pretended the Spirit, that it was a Doctrine taught them by the Spirit of God, accompanied by his presence in their Spirits with more than ordinary flashes, and raptures, and In-bearings of the Spirit of Light. And *Secondly*, that they had the word or Scripture to alledge for it. And *Thirdly*, they picked somewhat out of *Pauls* Letters for them, so would they say: In speaking against us he contradicts himself: These are fair pretences; and yet, sayes *Paul, be not shaken in mind with them.* So, say I, ye would guard your self against the fair pretences which Error may have, and look not only to the out side, but to the inside of them, and then ye will find most bitter Serpents Lurking under fairest flowers.

As for example, The Mother of all Error *Tolleration* hath a fair pretence for it, *viz.* that good men may Err, and so in suppressing Error ye may suppress Piety: A fair pretence, but it hath a foul end. For by this meanes Blasphemers, Denyers of God and Jesus Christ, must have Liberty to vent their damnable Errors, if so be that they can but pretend Conscience, and so stable roome must be given in Christs Church, to every unclean beast that ever was hatched in Hell. The *Antinomian* Errors again have a fair pretence, O say they, Christ hath become sin for us, and therefore it is taken off from us, so we are not bound to repent for it, for to say that we are to repent were to take the burthen off from Christs Back, and to put it on our own: These are specious words without solidity, but they contradict

Scripture Truths where they are narrowly looked to: *Peter* was a justified Person, and yet when Christ looked on him He weeped bitterly: *Davids* sin was pardoned, and Christ had taken the burthen of it, and yet *David* was to Repent of it, and to be corrected for it, and so the Lord tells him that *the sword should not depart from his house because he had made the* Enemies *of the Lord to Blaspheme*; and yet sin was not laid upon *David* to satisfy divine Justice for it: Only he must get on the fingers to make him more warry, and to fear all Justified Persons in time coming from doing the like. We might so run through all the Errors of the time, as that of *Independency*, whereby power is denyed to Presbytries, O, say they, to put power in Presbytries and make them receive Appeals from Congregations, it is to Tyrannize over particular Flocks; and therefore say they, nothing is better than that every Congregation have compleat power within themselves, and be left to their own guiding, not being countable to any Judicatory above them, but only to Christ: This seems a specious Bait for such as would have liberty, but when it is duly pondered, it will be found most contrary to Truth: For by this means, if a particular Flock should Err, and if one should suffer wrong at the hands of a particular Session, there is no remedy to repair the oppressed man, and to bring the Erring Congregation to a right mind: and how far this is derogatory to Jesus Christ who was perfect in all his house, any man may

may judge: We might run through more of them, But becauſe we have a mind to refute theſe Errors by themſelves, we ſhall inſiſt no further here, having ſaid enough to clear the point, that the moſt dangerous Errors may be born in under the faireſt pretences; and therefore ye would not take all to be Gold that gliſters, take not all for Truth that is decked up with a bundle of brave, high, raviſhing expreſſions.

Doct. 6 We proceed, *Believe not every Spirit*, ſayes he; He ſpeaks not this in vain. It ſuppoſes he ſaw an inclination in them to believe: The point of Doctrine that ariſeth from it is, That when foul Error is holden out under fair Names, and backed with fair pretences, There is a danger leſt people drink them in and believe them; for *John* ſaw that hazard, and therefore gives them a Watch-word: So in the 16 of the *Rom.* ver. 18. *For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly, and by good words and fair Speeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple*: Their baits hook'd the ſimple, before they were aware. We need no further proof of this, than the Example of our neighbour Church in *England*; Errors which could not have been named, but People would have loathed at them: ſuch as the *Arminian* Error againſt free Grace; &c. Yet being decked with the name of new light they are greedily drunk in by too too many,

Wee ſhall give ſome Reaſons to make you ſenſible of this hazard: How great danger there is, when Error is in ſpreading, that People be taken

off their feet with it: We shall point at *four* or *five* things that speaks this hazard: And the *first* is, the proneness of our nature to Drink in Untruths: We see this in *Eva*, for Error is natures brood: And, as we said, Error is the copy of some Lust, and therefore it soon infects: Truth again, it hath nothing in us, no party for it in our hearts, and therefore it is harder to make us take with it; there must be *word upon word, and precept upon precept*; we drink in Truth slowly and after much pains taken upon us, we are but to begin to learn it; but the Spirit of a man is quick to take up Error: Ye will find men more able in a short time to debate for Error, than in a long time to debate for Truth, I would seek no greater presumption that such a tenent is an Error than this, that as soon as it is set on fire, it runs through great numbers, and sets their Spirits on edge for it, we are not so hot for Truth, it is not our nature to be so taken with it.

Reason. 2 Then there is a *Second* thing that speaks this hazard, and it is, the shallowness of Peoples apprehension, together with their foolish hast before they try; From the shallowness of many it is, that they cannot put a difference betwixt a fair pretence, and a foul Error that is hid under it, and from the hast of Peoples Spirit it is that they ingage suddainly with any thing having the colour of Truth; and being once ingaged they are still the more and more involved: These two laid together are another thing to point out this hazard.

Reason 3. We may add a *Third*, and this is desire of

of Novelty in People spoken of in 2 *Timoth:* Chap: 4. v. 3-----*after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away*, &c. Where by the way observe, that Lust within is the cause of drinking in Error from without: But the thing we mark, is, That they have an itching ear lusting after new things, and this comes from their little practising of old Truths.

Reas: 4 There is a *Fourth* Reason, and it is the diversity of baits and pretences that is put upon several Errors, according to Peoples several humors: So subtile is *Sathan* that he puts a bait on for every appetit; there are some that are Piously strict and are enclined so to be, both towards themselves and others, and he hath a bait to catch those, to wit, a pretence of strickness which the Error of *Separation* is covered with, for this Error alloweth Church fellowship with none but these that have a real evidence of Grace in them: It is a way think they to shame natural Men. Again there be some whose humor is for looseness, he puts on a bait to gratify this humor also, let them believe in Christ and let them live as they like, sayes the *Antinomian*, and so according to Peoples several humors, there is a bait put on by the Devil upon Error: Now when these baits and Peoples humors agree, it is like powder and fire, presently they kindle.

Reas. 5 There is a *fifth* thing which speaks this hazard, and it is this; The Lord, that Error may be a tryal, in his holy Justice lets out more than ordinary parts and abilities, on spreaders of Error, and

and on the Spirits of People when they are taken with it: The Lord for a Judgement to themselves, and for a tryal unto others, gives them as we speak, a cast of their craft, he elevates them above their ordinary Sphere, or what is their ordinary way: And this we speak not without Scripture, It is said of false Anti-christian Teachers *they shall come with lying signs and wonders*; And there is a *Spirit of Error* which he foretells shall accompany Error, *Be not soon shaken in mind neither by Spirit nor by word*, &c. In that place that we already cited 2 *Thess.* 2, 2. When we look on all these things we hope we have made out the point: *viz.* that foulest Errors even when they are colloured with fairest pretences, there is a danger, lest People drink them in.

The use of the point is, If there be this hazard then ye would be afraid of your selves, it is said, *The Righteous fear always.* I would seek no clearer mark of any person that is like to be taken in the snare, than that they think themselves so stout and stedfast that no Error will gain upon them: and I would think it an evidence very good, when people are afraid of themselves, and do humble themselves, in the sense of their own weakness, and are employing Christ daily to bear them through, *For Blessed is he that feareth always.*

Only remember that this fear would be of the right Stamp: And for clearing this, we shall point at three or four things, wherein this holy fear does consist, specially with Reference to Error. *First* where this fear is, There will be a labouring to root Truth

in

in the heart: Ye know, when People are affraid of loſing any thing, that they will labour by all meanes to be ſure of it: A man that hath this *Holy fear* over himſelf, leſt he be enſnared with Error will ſtudy to gett Truth rooted in the heart. *Prov.* 2. 16. The Spirit of God ſpeaketh of *hiding of underſtanding, putting it in the ſecret place of the heart.* A *ſecond* thing accompanying this fear, is a forecaſting what Truth may coſt yon; there would be a fore-caſting of this, and a taking an Eſſay of the Croſs before hand, and this for fear leſt that to eſchew ſuffering ye quite the Truth, if the tryall come on you unexpectedly; *Paul* while he is exhorting the Diſciples to ſtedfaſtneſs, informs them *That through much tribulation we muſt enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.* Acts 14. 22. Then there is a *third* thing accompanying this *Holy fear*, and that is, a fear to venture on Temptations to Error, except there be a Providence putting to it, of neceſſity; and this fear riſes from the Senſe of our own weakneſs to engage with, or ſtand the ſhock againſt Temptations, this is implyed in that direction which the Apoſtle *Paul* gives 2 *Timoth.* 3, 5: At the end of the verſe---*From ſuch turn away v.* 6. *For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes*----: When a man is ſenſible of his own weakneſs, the fear of his being enſnared will keep him from walking among ſnares. A *fourth* thing accompanying this *Holy fear* is, that tho ye find theſe Truths ye have had once ſealed to your Spirits begin to be queſtioned, and that ye are not able to anſwer what is bronght againſt them, and ſo perchance your Judgment may incline to think,

that

that what ye thought once to be Truth is now Error; Yet where this *Holy fear* is, ye will rather suspect your own want of knowledge to discern, than any way suspect the Truth to be untruth; and it will make you at least abstain from venturing even on that which your light points out for the time.

Now by these ye may know what is the Fearlessness that makes People to be in danger, and it is this, when it makes thee so inconcerned that thou never Labours to get Truth brought lower than thy head: when thou never casts an account what Truth may stand thee; when thou art so confident of thy own wit and knowledge, that thou will venture uncalled to dispute with *Sectarian Spirits*; or when any thing is born in as Truth contrary to what thou hast maintained, as a Truth before, and contrary to thy Covenant engagment, thou grippes presently to it without once suspecting that thy own shallow understanding may be deceived. This, I say, speaks a fearlesness that borders neigh unto Error.

Doct: VII. The Doctrine that followeth next from these words *Believe not every Spirit*, is, that Ministers the Servants of God are not to clap Peoples heads, or indulge them in this inclination of theirs to Error, they are not to humor them in it; but on all hazards they are to testify against it: Therefore, sayes *John*, *Believe not every Spirit*, So also the Apostle *Paul* does very sharply inveigh against People, when they are beginning to tamper with Error: And lest People should say *Paul* and *John* were Apostles, and knew what was Error and what was Truth, being guided

guided by an infallible Spirit, and that therefore they might ſtoutly teſtify againſt Error; but for other ordinary Miniſters, they may err as well as other People, and ſo it is ill reaſoned from what the Apoſtles did to what Miniſters may now do: Therefore to clear this we ſhall give a place where *Paul* bindes it as Duty on every ordinary Miniſter to to teſtify againſt Error. In the *Acts* ch: 20. v. 28. *Therefore take heed unto your ſelves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghoſt, hath made you overſeers,* &c. And in the 29. *Verſe* he gives an inſtance wherein they were to take heed to the flock, *For* I *know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the Flock.* verſe 30. *Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, &c.* So it is a duty lying on all ordinary Preachers, to watch over their People, leſt they be ſeduced with Error, and that becauſe *Firſt* of that which we ſpoke of before, that Error in the point of Truth ſhould be as much eſchewed by People as other particular ſins; and therefore Miniſters are bound to guard People againſt it. And *ſecondly*, Truth is a precious Jewel and therefore in a ſpecial manner, they ought to contend for it. And *Thirdly* the Souls of People ought to be pretious to Miniſters, and therefore Miniſters ought to watch over them, they ought to guard them againſt Error; becauſe, as other ſins, ſo Error is a damnable Soul-deſtroying ſin. And therefore as Miniſters love Truth and Souls committed to them, ſo they muſt watch over the People, and guard them againſt Error,

Use I. This shows the great task lying upon Ministers at every time, but chiefly in an Erring time: we spoke somewhat of this before how difficult it is for a man to meddle with reproving of Error, more difficile than to reprove Prophanity; because a prophane Man's Conscience is convinced of the evil of his way; and therefore however he may be displeased with free Preaching against his sin, yet his Conscience clears the Minister; and thus he keeps him, at least, at some reverence: But it is not so in a Soul taken with Error, the misinformed Conscience speaks for it, and therefore whatever is spoken against him, he casts at it as Error and untruth; and readily the man that speaketh it may lose respect for his pains, and yet we see the Word of God binds it on Ministers to speak against it.

Use 2. But *Secondly*, If it be so that Ministers be bound to reprove Error and testify against it; then the People are bound to take the word of reproof from them: we mean not that they should be so bound as what Ministers say should be the *Bible*; but this much we say, That People should presume as much on them as another, to ask Councel from them as much as from another; and to respect them as much as any other: And that for these Reasons, *First*, because the publick Minister hath a promise which private men have not, at least not such an ample grant, as it is *Matth*: 28. 19. *Goe ye therefore and teach all nations, &c-----and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.* It doth not exem them indeed from Erring themselves; but the pro-

promiſe, is there more largly given to them than to others. And *Secondly* Miniſters as called watch men have the charge of Peoples Souls: God hath charged them with them, which he hath not charged others with: there is not a charge of Peoples Souls, laid on private men by way of office; every one is bound indeed by way of Charity, to take a care of the Souls of others, contrair to that of *Cain, am I my brothers keeper.* But beſide this tye of Charity lying on ſent Miniſters, there is a tye by vertue of a particular charge; So that place *Act*: 20. *Take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghoſt, hath made you overſeers.* He hath given them a ſpecial Charge, and ſo they are charged in a ſpecial way with Peoples Souls. Then there is a *Third* Reaſon, it is *Sathan's* Method to bring in Error on People by caſting in prejudices betwixt them and ſent Miniſters, which we have cleared ſometimes from Scripture, and ſo it ſhould be watched againſt, leſt *Sathans* ſubtility prevail ſo far as to bring People to diſ-reſpect their Miniſters, for if that be once gained he hath prevailed very much.

Doct: VIII. Now further, he ſayes, *Believe not every Spirit.* But bring them to the tryal. Doe not caſt at all *but try the Spirits,* Hence take this Doctrine: It is not Gods way, that People becauſe, there are differences about Religion, ſhould therefore believe no Religion, that is not Gods way: So *Matth*: 16. we ſee the Apoſtles practiſe, Chriſt ſayes unto them, *whom ſay they that I am?* *Say they, ſome ſay that thou art* John *the Baptiſt, ſome* Elias, *others* Jeremiah,

or

or one of the Prophets. But whom say ye that I am? They do not Answer, *we know not what to say, there are so many different sayings about thee,* but say they, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.*

Reas. So People are not to cast at all Religion because there are differences about it; and that because, *First*, that were to give way to the Devils plot; His design in raising up Error about Religion is, to make People *Atheists*, so as not to care for any Religion; and so when the use which thou makest of different Opinions, is that thou wilt believe none, Thou fulfillest the Devils design. *Secondly*, thou makes use of Gods Providence to thy destruction. The Lords Providence in raising up Error is, to make men seek more after the knowledge of the Truth: And when thou makest that use of it, to cast at all Religion, thou mockest the Holy Counsel of God to thy own ruin.

The Use then of the Doctrine is, to reprove those of this stamp; to wit, Prophane Atheistical men that make no differences about Religion but this: Let Church-men once agree among themselves what's right, and what's wrong; untill then, the back of our hand to altogether; that is a wofull way.

Indeed there may be a doubt proposed here *viz.* What else shall poor ignorant People do about differences in Religion, but to lay aside the care of all, when they see every party have their own Reasons stronger than these poor People can Answer; I *Answer*, there are some directions grounded on Scripture, which if we walk by, may bring us to a safe shore

shore, amidst these rocks of contrary Opinions; And the *first* is this, that for Differences that concern not Peoples practice, I would not have People trouble themselves much with them; as for example, Our late unhappy Differences about *the publick Resolutions*; the Lord hath taken the occasion of them away; so I would not have any troubling themselves much about them: Whatever Differences in matters of practice fall in, it seems to be a safe rule, that when the occasion of such Practices are removed, all Contention about them should be laid aside. *Secondly*, As to the Differences wherein Peoples practice is concerned, take these Rules: *First*, For these that are uncontraverted Truths make Conscience of the practice of them, which will help to the knowledge of other things; this rule Christ prescribes, *John* 7. 17. sayes he, *If any man do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of* God, &c. There is something that thy Conscience is clear of to be Duty, and although the Differences of Opinion might be some excuse to make thee keep off from these things about which there is difference, yet how art thou excused for neglect of these things which thou art convinced to be Duty, as *Prayer, Reading the Word*; &c. *Secondly*, We would know, whatever be the contrary Opinions about matters of Religion, yet there is but one true way; and the knowledge of this one way may be attained to, by those who seek humbly after it: At least, if thou be judging thy self, and as a damned Bankrupt or Dyvour by Nature, be closing with Christ, and drawing Grace from him to make thee Holy, Thou wilt attain to the knowledge of as much of

these things debated, as will take thee home to Heaven. A *Third* Direction is, That ye should beware of calling in question any of these Truths that once have been Sealed into your Spirits by the Spirit from the Word of God, 2 *John* ver. 8. *Look to your selves that we lose not those things which we have wrought*, The point of Truth that People have got thus Sealed to their Conscience, should not readily be called in question. A *Fourth* Direction is this, That in seeking out Truth under Differences, we should beware of Loftyness of Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 14..32 it is said *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*, How much more ought the Spirits of private persons to be subject to the voice of Christs Ambassadors speaking in his Courts. This is not as if we would make Ministers Sayings the Peoples Rule to walk by: But this much will follow that in a constitute Church where Discipline is Exercised, there should be that Humility in People, that when doubts arise concerning any point of received Truth within the Church, they should offer their Judgement, and the Reason of it to the Prophets and Christs Courts to be tryed, before they lay down any new Opinion as a solid Truth: That much is contained under this, *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*, if it mean any thing at all.

Doct. IX. Now we proceed. The next thing that we come to, is, what People should do, *Try the Spirits*, and the Rule of Tryal is, *whether they are of God.* The *first* point we learn is, that how fair soever the pretence be, that our Doctrine is colloured with, it should not be taken upon Trust: but the Spirits must

be

be *Tryed.* Such we see was the practice of the *Bereans*, and they are commended for it, they would not take the Apostles Doctrine on trust. *Act:* 17. 11. *These were more noble than those in* Thessalonica, *in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures dayly whether those things were so.* They would not take the Apostles Doctrine on trust: and this is a command given by *Paul* writing to the *Thess:* 1 Epistle ch: 5. v. 21. *Prove all things* after he had said, *despise not Prophecyings*, So that Doctrines should be brought to a Tryal, whatever be their fair pretences.

Reas: The Reasons are *first*: because foulest Errors may be coloured over with fairest pretences. And *Secondly* the Scripture sayes, *all men are Lyars*; that is to say, all men may Err; and therefore words cannot be the Ground of Divine Faith; for Faith must have an infallible ground as *Ephes:* 2. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, &c. *i. e.* the word Preached by them, and dictated by the Spirit of God.

Use. This Doctrine reproves *first*, the *Papists* that will have nothing Tryed; that comes from the Church; but all taken upon trust, hence is it that many swallow such Monsters of Absurdities, as the Errors of *Transubstantiation*, Purgatory, Merite, Mass, and such like, for which they have no other ground, but because their Church sayes so; But this Doctrine holdeth out another duty that who ever heareth any Doctrine proponed by one or other, they are bound to pass their Judgment on it, *Try the Spirits.*

Now that we may walk betwixt extreams, the *Papists* on the one hand, who set up Tyranny, and these *Sectaries* on the other hand, who set up Confusion; we would know there is a twofold Judgement to be passed on *Doctrine*: Publick Judgement, and Private Judgement: Publick Judgement again, is either, peremptorily absolute, or limited. A publick peremptory Judgement is, That which binds the Conscience to obey simply that which is spoken, and none have this Judgement, but God himself. *Secondly*, There is a publick Judgement which is limited, and this is a publick declaring and holding out that which is found to be God's mind in his word, which does not bind absolutely, but in so far as it agrees with the Word; and this Judgement belongs to publick Church Judicatories met together in Christs Name: They are like the Lyon-Herauld set forth to proclaim the Royal Acts, if he proclaim that which is contained in the principal Acts, it binds; but if he add any thing of his own, it binds not. Next, there is a private Judgement of Discretion, and this belongs to every Christian: every man in relation to his own practice, is bound to pass Sentence on what is held out to him by others, that if it be right, he may embrace it, but if wrong, he may reject it; but his private Judgement is not binding to others. Now this private Judgement, or this Judgement of Discretion is necessary, because all men may Err; Councils may Err, Synods, *&c.* And *Secondly*, Their Error will not excuse private Christians to follow them in their Error: sayes

Christ

Christ, *When the Blind leads the Blind both falls into the Ditch.* And therefore there must be a Judgement of Discretion in private persons to try what they hear.

And this much for guarding against the *Popish* Tyranny; but least this Doctrine be abused to cast at all publick Church Judicatories, we shall next speak somewhat to guard against *Sectarian* Confusion: *First*, Although publick Church Judicatories have not Power to bind Consciences; yet when men are in a doubt concerning a point of Truth, their Judgement ought to have more weight than the Judgement of private Men: And that not only because there are more Gifts exercised together, but mainly because there is a promise annexed to the Commission given by Christ to publick Church Judicatories, *Matth.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* And *Secondly*, From this it followes, that there would be a kind of loathness to differ from publick Church Judicatories; a man's grounds would be well examined, lest if differing from these Judicatories, they also differ from *Truth.* And *Thirdly*, when they differ they are to bear them at Reverence, although in such a point they should Err, yet for their Authority, they are to be Reverenced: This much is granted by us to Church Judicatories, but no further, They are not to be made the Rule of our Faith.

Use 2. It reproves those who are Lazie, and cannot endure the trouble of trying what they hear, but take things on trust, and have no more but such

a mans Authority, he is of that Way and Opinion, and therefore they are Fire and Flint, Tooth and Nail for it, as much as if they had the Word of God for it: We have seen much of this in the unhappy Differences that have fallen out in our time, which I have no pleasure to speak much of, and therefore we proceed to another Doctrine.

Doct. X. The next thing then that we observe is from what he sayes, *Try*, &c. *whether they be of God*; that is the Tryal: The Doctrine is this, That the right *tryal* of *Doctrine* is, *To try whether they be of God* or not, and this point puts us to give Marks whereby it shall be known what Doctrine is of God, and what Doctrine is not of God; and here we shall speak to two things. *First*, We shall show what are the marks that necessarly infer a Doctrine to be of God. And *secondly* we shall speak of other things that do not infer necessarly a Doctrine to be of God, but for the most part follow upon such a Doctrine.

For the *First*, That which makes Doctrine necessarily to be of God, is, if it be according to the rule of the Word. So when the *Bereans* are commended *Acts* 17. The rule they went by in the tryal of *Paul*'s Doctrine, is the Scripture: And this is *Isaia*'s rule, chap. 8. ver. 20. *To the Law and to the Testimony*, &c. He would have all Doctrines tryed by the Word of God: So the *Word* is the rule, and that Doctrine which has the *Word* for it, is of God; and whatever Doctrine has not the *Word* for it, is not of God: All Spirits, even the Spirit of God himself, must be tryed that way: And that because the Word

is

is a perfect rule: I give only two places of Scripture to clear the perfection of this rule. *First*, The heavy Plagues pronounced against those who add to this rule: The *Word* is so perfect, that if an Angel should come and pretend a purer Rule, *Let him be* (sayes *Paul*) *Anathema. Gal.* 1. 8. There is another place which proves the perfection of this rule according to this point in hand, 2 *Timoth.* 3. 16, 17. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for Instruction in righteousness. That the Man of God may be perfect*, &c. So there is as much in the word of God, as may make the man of God perfect: And this in relation to *Doctrine* and Instruction, *It is profitable for Doctrine and Instruction*, It will make a man perfect in that, as well as in reproof.

Use, This reproves, *First* the *Papists*, they cast by the rule of the *Word*, and will have their *Traditions*, and their *Popes Decrees* to be the rule. But of this enough already in the preceeding Doctrine. In the *second* place, it reproves the *Sectaries*, some whereof reprove the Word, they will have a higher tryal and rule to examine by; and it is the inbearing of Gods Spirit, say they, He is the Spirit of Truth, and can he bear in a Lye: But, say we, how know they the Spirit of the Devil by the Spirit of God, except they bring it to the Word. So the Word is the Rule, yea and the last Rule.

But here is a doubt which we shall speak to. This is a very hard task, may some say, for poor ignorant People to try Doctrines by the *Word*; the *Word*

it self is obscure, and every one pretends the *Word*, all Parties will say that they have the *Word*, and so it is hard for us to know what is of God, and what not, if we have no other rule but the Word: I answer it is very true, there are very few *Sectaries* who will not pretend the *Word*: And yet it does not follow that ye may cast by the Word. But *Secondly*, we say, although the *Word* be in some places obscure, and although Men of Opinions as contrary to the Word as Light is to Darkness, may every one of them wrest the *Word*, yet there is as much of the *Word* clear, if it be rightly studied, as will make a man know what is right, and what is wrong. Hence that Epithet given to the *Word*, *The word of the Lord is a Lamp to direct thy Paths.* The *Word* of the Lord is not unfitly compared to a Sea, wherein Elephants, *i. e.* men of greatest parts and Learning may swime, and readily lose their feet, how great soever their parts be, if they rely upon them. And yet it may be compared to a shallow calm running Stream, wherein Lambs, that *is*, men of mean Gifts, may wade, and find out Gods mind in it, if they be humble and take Gods way for searching of it.

But say ye, what is that way of God wherein people may hope, so as not to miscarry in the searching out of Gods mind in his Word. In answer to this, we shall give several Directions. *First*, A man that would not mistake Gods mind in his Word, should be a diligent Reader of it, *Acts* 17. 11. *---and searched the Scriptures daily*, &c. it was their daily task. And *Secondly*, Reading of the Word should have Prayer

go-

going alongs with it, *Prov:* 2. 3. *Yea if thou cryest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,* ver. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: Then,* &c. this crying and seeking is certainly in Prayer, as well as in other means. When people joyn Prayer with the Reading of the Word, they will more readily attain to the knowledge of Gods mind, Than a man that takes no more with him but his own natural parts. *Thirdly,* The word should be read with Meditation, *Psal:* 1. 2. *---in his Law doth he meditate day and night.* And *Fourthly,* with Self-denial. *Prov.* 3 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own unaerstanding.* We should go to the Word with a deep sense on us of our own Ignorance to seek Light from it.

There are several other directions how People may be led to get the meaning of the word; we shall speak of some. *First,* Obscure places being compared with these that are more clear, will be clear also: There are some places obscure, but the Lord hath been so Graciously condescending in contriving the Scriptures that there are other places to make them clear: So there is an obscure place: *we are not under the Law but under Grace* which at first seems to sound as if People needed not to take heed to the Law; But there is another place, that clearly shows how we are not under the Law *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* They are freed from the condemning power of the Law, but not from the directions of it. *Secondly,* in obscure and dark places of Scripture on which men according

cording to their several Conceptions, would Father several senses, the meaning that agrees most with the Analogy of Faith should be taken: this is that which *Paul* calls the forme of wholsom words. So there is a place controverted *he laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Says the *Antinomians* all our sins were laid on Christ, and so do what we will, we are not bound to seek pardon or mourn for them; for our sins are laid on him, and so we have none: Now this glose is contrary to the whole current of Scripture, which holds out that believers have sin in them, a body of Death. 1 *John* 1, 8. If *we say we have no sin we deceive our selves and the Truth is not in us.* It holdeth out believers at their best condition as Mourning for sin, and praying for the pardon of sin *Rom.* 7. *Psalm* 25. 11. So that this *Antinomian* sense cannot be right, because it is contrar to the whole current of Scripture; and therefore the laying of our iniquities on him, must be the guilt and punishment of our iniquity, and not the being of sin it self, *which was bound upon Christ:* So another place the promoters of *Tolleration* pleads from, is that in *Phil.* 3, 15. that Counsel that *Paul* gives *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you*: say they, there is *Tolleration* whatever be Peoples differences, let them walk according to their Light; we say again, that what *Paul* sayes of mutual forbearance must not be extended to all Errors; but it must only be applyed to these that were Errors of infirmitie; As *Rom.* 15. 1. we

then

then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. And that the opposite meaning cannot be right, because it is contrair to the current of many other Scriptures, which command Hereticks to be Excommunicat. *An Heretick after the first and second admonition reject.* and not so much as *bid them God speed*: So this is another way to know the meaning of the Scripture. And this much now for directions to help you in the study of Gods word, that you may attain to know Gods mind in it; and so to know whether *a Doctrine be of God or not.*

We thought to have spoken of these other marks which do not infer necessarly a Doctrine to be of God, but for the most part do follow on such a Doctrine; but the time being now ended, I shall only name them: *First*, That Doctrine which is of God will have Holiness following upon it: And so that Doctrine of the *Antinomians* that tends to prophanity of life cannot be of God. *Secondly*, that Doctrine that is of God tends to exalt Christ. *John* 16. 15. Speaking of the Spirit of Truth, he sayeth,--- *he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you.* And so that Doctrine of the *Papists*, I mean their Doctrine of *Merit*, is not of God. *Thirdly*, That Doctrine which is of God humbles men, as Error doth fill men with pride: Thus those *Sectaries* that are spoken of in *Jude* are called *Lofty*; and so the Doctrine of *Separation* is not of God, because whatever be the pretence of strickness that it caries along with it, there is an over-weaning conceit of the Man's self

and

and undervaluing of others, that cleaves to this Error. And *Secondly*, it maketh People orderly in standing for it: So is it said of Christ *His voice is not heard in the streets.* Now these marks as we have said do but usually follow, for because of the corruptions of men even the Doctrines that are of God may want these properties, and the Doctrines that are not of God may have a shew of them; and therefore the first mark to wit, the word, is the adequate Rule, So that all Doctrines ought to be brought to it. Whatever be the shew any Doctrine hath, whether of Holiness, exalting Christ and free Grace, whatever shew it have of Humility and orderly carriage, in those who profess it in their avowing of it: Yet if it be not according to this Rule, (*viz.* the word of God) it is not of God.

Doct. XI. We come now to our main design, to wit the Refutation of some of the most dangerous Errors of the Times. The ground of what we are to speak to this purpose is taken from the following Doctrine, which is evidently imported in the words; to wit, That there are many Doctrines pretending to the Spirit, which yet being brought to the Touch-stone will be found not *to be of God.* For while he bids us try *the Spirits whither they be of God,* He evidently insinuates that there are some Spirits which being brought to the tryal will be found faulty, and not to be of God. I shall, God willing, give instances of this, and accordingly make it out upon the most taking, dangerous, and most Erronious Doctrines of the Times, particularly upon those following;

First, the Doctrine of T*olleration*. *Secondly*, the Doctrine of *Erastianism*. T*hirdly* the Doctrine of *Independency*. F*ourthly*, the Doctrine of S*eparation*. *Fifthly*, the Doctrine of the ordinary Preaching by unsent men. S*ixthly*, the Doctrine of *Antinomianism*. And *Lastly* the Doctrine of *Anabaptism*: In all which we shall with the Lords assistance make it appear here, that however they pretend to be Doctrines warranted by the Spirit of God in his word, yet they are not so warranted, in a word we shall show they are *not of God*.

SECT.

SECT: II.

A BRIEF REFUTATION OF THE ERROR OF Tolleration.

WE shall begin with the Error of *Tollera-tion*; of all Opinions in the matter of Religion, a Doctrine that is much cryed up among *Sectaries*, and a Doctrine that is very taking; what (thinks People) if they get leave to serve God according to their own Conscience, they need not trouble themselves what others do. Our purpose is to show that this Doctrine, though it pretend to the Spirit, is not of God: and for this end we

* *The Author did in the beginning of his Sermon read several Texts of Scripture.*

we have read these places of Scripture whereupon we are to ground the most of what is to be said against this Error.

I begin to refute this Error of *Tolleration* *First*, because it is the *Sectaries* main refuge, it is their *Holy of Holys* wherein they shelter themselves in their grossest Errors: what, say they, it is our Conscience and who dare meddle with Conscience but the God of Conscience. *Secondly*, we think it needfull to begin with it; *First*, because of all other Errors it is the most dangerous and damnable, in so far as other Errors do only evert these particular Truths of Scripture to which they are contrary; but by this one Errror (this Monster of *Tolleration*) way is made to evert all the Truths contained in Scripture, and to the setting up all Errors contrary to every Jote of Truth: and in the mean time there shall be no power on earth to hinder it, or take order with it.

In prosecuting of this, we shall follow this Method *First*, we shall clear the state of the question *Secondly*, we shall bring our Arguments for confirming the Truth, and vindicate them from the Adversaries exceptions. *Thirdly*, We shall bring forth their Arguments, and shall refute them from Scripture and Reason. And *Fourthly*, We shall apply the whole to some practical use.

First, For the state of the question, what a thing this *Tolleration* is that we Labour to refute: There is a two-fold *Tolleration* of Error: There is a *Church Tolleration* and a *State Tolleration*.

tion. A *Church Tolleration* is, That whereby it is pleaded that Error and Hereſy ſhould have liberty to be vented and go free even from Church Cenſure; ſuch as ſuſpenſion from the Sacraments or Excommunication. There are but few *Sectaries* of any note that plead for *Tolleration* in this Latitude, and that becauſe the Scripture is ſo plain againſt it. *Paul* ſayes, *An Heretick after the firſt and ſecond Admonition reject.* Therefore they are content that Church-cenſures ſuch as Excommunication be inflicted on Hereticks, providing, *Firſt*, that they be free from Civil cenſure. *Secondly*, That Excommunication be inflicted for no Error, but for theſe that are contrary to fundamental points of Truth, or as ſome ſay contrary to the very light of Nature: Upon theſe and no other will they have Excommunication to ſtrike.

Though this be not the main queſtion which we are to inſiſt upon: Yet we ſhall lay down ſome aſſertions contrary to their Doctrine, even in this point. And *Firſt*, we do not ſee what reaſon can be brought to exeem Hereticks from civil Cenſure; but the ſame may be brought to exeem them from Church Cenſures alſo; If Conſcience, as they ſay, be free from the one, what reaſon but it ſhould be free from the other alſo? And if fear of civil Cenſure againſt thoſe who Err do as they ſay enforce the Conſcience, and make People Hypocrites; we ſee not but the fear of Church Cenſures may do the ſame: Or if, notwithſtanding of Church Cenſures, the Conſcience is not forced, the Service not conſtrained,

which they grant, then notwithstanding of Civil Censure it is not forced, or the Service constrained either: And so from their own grounds this vast *Tolleration* of *Error* falls to the ground. *Secondly*, We cannot assent to that which they affirm, that Excommunication is not to be inflicted for any Error; but these which are contrary to fundamental points of Religion; and that because Christ gives us a rule upon what faults Excommunication should strick; *to wit*, on every scandalous Fault done against a Brother, or the Church wherein the Offender persists obstinate, and will not be reclaimed: So *Matth.* 18. 17. *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a Publican.* That is, Excommunicate him. Now, for what faults he is to be Excommunicate, they are set down v. 15. Moreover, *if thy brother shall trespass against thee* &c. So it is a scandalous Trespass wherein the offender does persist and remain obstinate, on which according to Christ's Rule, Excommunication should strick: Now sure it is, there are many Errors not contrary to fundamental Truths; such as many points of *Arminianism*, *Antinomianism* &c. which yet persisted in are Scandalous both to particular Christians and the Church; and therefore according to Christs Rule, Excommunication should strick upon other Errors than those contrary to the fundamental Points of Religion, which is contrary to their assertion. *Thirdly*, Neither can we assent that Excommunication should strick on no other Errors but those con-

contrary to the light of Nature, and that not only becauſe of what is preſently ſaid, that Excommunication ſhould ſtrick againſt every ſcandalous Sin done againſt a Brother, or the Church wherein the offender does perſiſt and remain obſtinate; but alſo according to that Rule whereby they maintain that Excommunication ſhould ſtrick on no other Error, but theſe that are contrary to the very Light of Nature; it would follow that the publiſher of theſe Errors following (or the like againſt fundamental Truths) ſhould not be cenſured: *to wit*, That the Scriptures are not the word of God. That *Jeſus Chriſt* was an Impoſtor, a Deceiver: That we are not juſtified by free Grace; I ſay according to that rule, ſuch Hereticks ſhould not be cenſured, no not Eccleſiaſtically; becauſe theſe Errors are not againſt Natures Light, but Scripture Light only; for Natures Light teacheth not the Truths which are contrary to theſe Errors. This much for Church *Tolleration*, but, as ſaid is, concerning this is not the preſent Contraverſy.

The main queſtion then is, concerning State *Tolleration*. Concerning which ſome do affirm, That whatever the Church may do in Inflicting Church Cenſures on Hereticks, Maintainers of Heterodox Opinions: Yet, ſay they, no civil Puniſhment, ſuch as Death, Impriſonment, Mulcts, or Fines, ſhould be inflicted on any Error or Blaſphemy whatſoever; providing the Maintainers of them carry themſelves peaceably, do not trouble the State, or do evil againſt the Commonwealth in civil Things: We a-

gain on the contrary do hold, That it is the Duty of the Civil Magistrate to suppress Error, Heresie, and every sin against the First Table, as well as it is his Duty to suppress Adultery, Fornication, Sedition, and other sins against the second Table: And that he is not only bound to suppress Errors and Blasphemies, that are contrary to fundamental Truths, or the Light of Nature; but all Error contrary to other points of Truth.

Now for clearing the State of this Question, and freeing it from some odious Imputations that may be cast upon it: Before we come to Arguments we shall lay down these Assertions: *First*, We do not say that the Magistrate is bound to punish Hereticks at the first step; Pains should first be taken to inform them, the Judgement of the Church is Antecedent, and their Labour is to convince Gainsayers: So this must go before the Magistrates Duty, they must be found Obstinate before the Magistrate medle with them, or punish them Civilly; Especially if their Errors be not horrid Blasphemies against God and Natures Light, in such the Magistrate is not bound to give so much Forbearance. *Secondly*, We do not say that all Errors and Heresies are to get alike punishment; but according to the degrees of the guilt that is in them, even as it is in sins committed against the Second Table: Murder is a more hainous Fault than Fornication, and therefore the Magistrate is bound to punish it more highly. Even so is it in Sins done against the First Table; Blasphemies done against God, or a denying of the true God, is a higher

higher Sin than Worshiping of the true God after a false manner; and therefore the Magistrate is bound to punish it more severely. *Thirdly*, As we do not say, that every Error and Heresie is to receive the like punishment; so neither do we say that every one that maintains the same Error is to be alike punished, for there are some that are Seducers, or Drawers on of others to Error, Disturbers of the Peace of the Church, Ring-leaders; there are others again that are only seduced and drawn away to Error; and these last, although they should not be *Tollerate*, yet the power of the Magistrate is to be exercised more sparingly towards them. So *Secondly*, There are some rooted in Error, confirmed in it, who will not hear Instruction: There are others that are but weak, and are seeking Light, whose way evidenceth them to be Conscientious, only for the time they are Ignorant, and in Humility seeking after Light; and these last, the Magistrate, as all other Christians, is to bear much with, according to *Rom.* 15. 1. *We then that are strong, ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak*, &c.

Now this being said to clear the question, we come to Arguments to make out this Truth, *to wit*, That the Magistrate is bound to suppress and punish Error, Heresie, and other sins against the First Table, as well as he is bound to punish Adultery, Theft, and other sins against the Second Table.

The *First Argument* we bring is, from the approven practice of Kings and Magistrates under the Old Testament, from which we form an Argument

thus: If it was the approven practice of Kings and and Magistrates under the Old Testament to suppress Error, Heresie and Blasphemy, then Magistrates under the New Testament are bound to do the like: But, so it is that it was the approven practice of Kings and Magistrates under the Old Testament to suppress Error, Heresie and Blasphemy and other sins against the first Table: Therefore, Magistrates under the New Testament are bound to do the like: For confirming of this Argument there are two things to be made out: *First*, That it was the practice of the Magistrate under the Old Testament to suppress Error and Heresie. *Secondly*, As it was their practice, so their practice herein is approven of God, otherwise it were not binding unto others; for Kings and Magistrates did several things wherein they were not approven, and so not binding unto us now: The first thing then we are to clear is, that this was the practice of Magistrates under the Old Testament: And we shall begin *First* with *Abraham*'s practice, *Genes.* 18. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgement*, &c. *Secondly*, With *Jacob* who was a Magistrate in his own Family: And we shall see him employing his Power to suppress false Religion. In the 35 of *Gen.* vers. 2. *Then* Jacob *said unto his Houshold, and to all that were with him, put away the strange Gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your Garments.* And in the 4 verse, *And they gave unto* Jacob *all the strange Gods which were in their Hands,*

Hands, and all their Ear-rings which were in their Ears, and Jacob *hid them under the Oak which was by* Scechem. The *Third* practice which we shall observe, is that of *Asa* in the 2 *Chron.* 14. verf. 2. *And* Asa *did that which was good and Right in the Eyes of the Lord his God.* verse 3. *For he took away the Altars of the strange Gods, and the high places, and broke down the Images, and cut down the Groves.* Verse 4. *And commanded* Judah *to seek the Lord God of their* Fathers, *and to do the* Law *and the Commandment.* And in the 5 Verse *Also he took away out of the Cities of* Judah, *the High-places and the Images,* &c. And we shall find it in chap. 15. verf. 12, 13. *And they entred into a Covenant to seek the Lord God,* &c. *That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of* Israel, *should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.* And in the 16. *v.* he employes his power in this point against his own Mother *Maachah. And also concerning* Maachah *the Mother of* Asa *the King, he removed her from being Queen, because she had made an Idol, in a Grove: and* Asa *cut down her Idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook* Kidron. The *Fourth* practice shall be of King *Manasseth.* 2 Chron: 33, 15. (ye would mark such places for ye may have need of them) *And he took away the strange Gods, and the Idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in* Jerusalem, *and cast them out of the City.* v. 16------*And commanded* Judah *to serve the Lord God of* Israel. The last practice that we shall name is, that of *Josiah* 2 Chron: 34 v. 31, 32, 33. *And the King stood in his*

place, and made a Covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord &c. *And he caused all that were present in* Jerusalem *and* Benjamen, *to stand to it.* &c. *And* Josiah *took away all the Abominations out of all the countries, that pertained to the Children of* Israel, *and made all that were present in* Israel *to serve, even to serve the Lord their God*; Let this suffice to make out the first point, That such were the practices of Kings and Magistrates under the Old Testament.

The *Second* thing to be cleared is, That as these were their practices; so they were approven practices: And this is clear; *First* from Gods approbation given to them in that place before cited, 2 *Chron.* 14. 23. *Asa* gets a Testimony, That *He did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.* And wherefore? *For he took away the Altars of the strange Gods, and the high Places, and broke down the Images,* &c: And *Secondly*, We find that *Jehu*, although he was Hypocritical, was rewarded of God, for suppressing of False Worship: In 2 *Kings* 10. 30. *And the Lord said unto* Jehu, *because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the House of* Ahab, *according to all that was in mine heart, thy Children of the fourth Generation, shall sit on the throne of* Israel. We might bring several other evidences, that these their practices were approven of God, but what is already said may suffice.

The patrons of *Tolleration* bring several exceptions to weaken the strengh of this Argument, which we shall propone in as full strength as they come to our hand; and take them off: And the *First* exception

is

is this, say they, The practice of *Judah* and *Israel* under the Old Testament cannot be binding to Magistrats under the New, because they were Typical Kings, and the actions they did were Typical of somewhat to be done by Christ, and so not binding to us. To this we reply. *First*, That however this our hold concerning the practices of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel* after they entered *Canaan* who were Typical Kings (as they say) of this Typical Land, that they could not be binding to Magistrats now; yet we find it was the practice of *Jacob* before the the Kingdom of *Israel* was erected, and so what he did was not done by him as a Type of Christ, but a moral duty; and he was approven in it; we find also when heathen Kings came to the Knowledge of God, they employed their power this way and were approven in so doing; and surely they will not call Heathen Kings Types of Christ: We shall give one instance of this in the seventh chap: of *Ezra* v. 26. There a decree comes out from *Atraxerxes* a heathen King. *Whosoever will not do the Law of thy God, and the Law of the King, let Judgment be executed speedily upon him, whither it be unto Death, or to Banishment or to confiscation of Goods,* &c. Now lest it should be said this was a rash Act, and so not binding: therefore there is something in the Text equivalent to God's Approbation of it; to wit, *Ezra*'s Blessing the Lord that he had made such an Act Verse 27. But we give a *Second* Answer, to the Objection: Although it were granted that all the King's of *Israel* were Types of Christ, as we do not grant it in all,

especi-

especially in those who were wicked and Godless men, it does not follow that what they did in punishing false Doctrine, they Acted therein as Types of Christ: And if so, then it does not follow, that it is not binding now; except they will say that whatever was done by any who were Types of Christ in no wayes binding unto others; and if so they may as well argue, that what Magistrates under the Old Testament did in punishing sins against the second Table, such as Adultery, Murder, were done by them as they were Types of Christ; and so not binding to Magistrates now: Yea, upon the same ground they may infer that *Davids* Prayers and Tears for sin were no copy for us to follow; why these were Acts of one who was a Type of Christ. Yea by the same Reason, they may reject the whole Scripture of the Old Testament, as not binding unto us, because forsooth, it was written by the Prophets, and such as were Types of Christ, and so not binding to us. Thus we see what absurdity the giving way to such an exception will draw unto, and therefore it is to be rejected.

But their *Second* Exception seems more plausible and it is this, say they, The practice of the Kings of *Israel* doth not argue up fully to that which we do hold, because their practice did not strike on every Error against Truth, but only Idolatry; and not all Idolaters, but those that made Apostacy and served false Gods; and not all of those, but these only that seduced and drew away others to serve the false God. Now it does not follow from their punishing

nishing of Idolaters, who worshiped a false God; that therefore Magistrates are bound to punish Hereticks worshipping the true God though in a false way, This is the strength of their exception; to which we reply. *First*, That though it were true which they say that the practice of the Kings of *Israel* did extend but to Idolaters, and those that seduced and drew away others to serve false Gods, yet it does not follow but it may be binding to Magistrates now to punish Hereticks worshipping a true God in a false way, and that because of this rule necessarly to be admitted in expounding of Scripture, that when the command of God does strick against any one sin most usual in the time, by rule of proportion, it stricks against all sins of that kind, As in the second Command there is nothing expresly forbidden but the *Worshipping of God by graven Images*; and that because the worshipping of God by Images was the sin most in use at that time; yet under graven is forbidden all wayes of worshipping of God invented by men; and so although it were true that the practice of Godly Kings did strick but against Idolatry, yet by rule of proportion all sins of that kind should be suppressed: To which add, that when the high degree of any sins by divine Law is to be punished by death, common equity will infer, that lesser degrees of sin are to be punished by a lesser punishment at least. *Secondly*, to what they say, that the Magistrate did only punish Idolatry under the Old Testament. We Answer that it is false, they did punish other Errors also, and such as would be thought light

light of now; and this we shall instance in several particulars. *First*, They punished will worship in serving the true God, and this we see by comparing two places of Scripture: The first is the 2 *Kings* 23, 8, 9. Speaking of *Josiah*, *And he brought all the Priests out of the Cities of* Judah, *and defiled the high places, where the Priests had burnt incense*: So he employes his Power against the high places, for the removal of their way of worship. The other place of Scripture to be compared with, is the 2 *Chron.* 33. 17. (Which tells us the nature of their high places) *Nevertheless, the People did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only.* So that this worshipping on the high places, was not that kind of Idolatry whereby a false God was worshipped; but a way of their own, whereby they worshipped the true God, and yet *Josiah* suppresseth even this kind of false worship. *Secondly*, we find that Magistrates did employ their power for suppressing of the breakers of the Sabbath day, and and punishing those that Married strange wives, which yet were not Idolaters and Apostats from the true God; a noble example whereof is in *Nehemiah* 13. from verse 15, to 21. There is a large History what pains he took to reform the People to keep the Sabbath day, therefore in the 21. v. *Then I testified against them, and said unto them, why lodged ye about the wall? If ye do so again I will lay hands on you.* He threatens to employ the Civil power for suppressing of that Error, and this is not Idolatry. And *Secondly*, we find that the Magistrates employed

ed their power generally, for suppressing any Error that was contrary to any Article of the Covenant: So where we read in the 2 *Chron*: 34. 31, 32. *And the King stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord*----&c. *And he caused all that were present in* Jerusalem *and* Benjamin *to stand to it.* And the heads of the Covenant are not only against those who were Seducers, but also against those that were seduced: So we find it in *Exodus* 32, v. 20. In that Idolatry of worshipping the Golden Calf, when *Moses* came down from the mount in his zeal to the Glory of God, he not only punished *Aaron*, but also the People: and more than this, he Armes the *Levits*, as the avengers of God's Justice, and proclaims that every man should avenge the Lord upon his very Brother: Thus we have made out in the first Argument taken from the practice of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, and have vindicated it by Scripture from their exceptions brought against it.

The *Second* Argument shall yet be grounded on the Old Testament, and it is taken from the many commands and precepts, that are given in Scripture to Godly Kings and Magistrates and others to punish Blasphemers, False Prophets and Idolaters, Hereticks, Sabbath Breakers, and Seducers, from whence we form this Argument: That whatever was commanded to be done by Magistrates under the Old Testament as a part of their duty, this Magistrates under the New Testament are oblidged to as a part of their duty also: But Magistrates were commanded under the Old Testament to suppress Idolatry,

latry, Blasphemy, and Heresy and that they were to do as a part of their duty as Magistrates: And therefore it is a duty lying on Magistrates under the New. The thing we have to prove is, that this was a command given to Magistrates under the Old Testament and that as a part of their duty as Magistrates. And for this look over these places of Scripture Exod. 22. 20. *He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.* There is a command given to the Magistrates. And so in Levit. 24. 15. *And thou shalt speak unto the Children of* Israel, *saying, Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin.* v. 16. *And he that Blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death.* So in the 13. of Deut: 1. *If there arise among you a Prophet, or dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder.* &c. Through the whole Chapter there are Commands given to the Magistrate to punish false worship. We shall only add another, and that is taken from the fourth Command, where a charge is laid on the Magistrate as well as the Master of a Family to make use of his power for keeping of the Sabbath, and to see to the keeping of it by others also. *Thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor they son, nor they daughter*------This Command is given to the Magistrate as well as to the Master of the Family, as appears from those things. *First*, By vertue of this Command *Nehemiah* the Magistrate of God's People, did make use of his power to punish Sabbath Breakers in that place we cited in *Nehemiah* 13. 21. *Secondly*, It appears from this that the Gates spoken of their, *Nor*

any

any thing that is within thy Gates, is a term which aggreeth not to a single Family, but a whole City, even to the circuit of a whole Kingdom: so the word [*Gates*] is taken in Scripture Genes: 22. 17------*and thy seed shall possess the Gate of his enemies*: It followeth as in that respect, therefore he speaks to the Magistrate, no Master of a Family having such large power. And *Thirdly*, The power there spoken of, is to be extended to Strangers: now the chief care of Strangers did belong to the Magistrate, and not to the Master of a Family, therefore *Nehemiah* the Magistrate extends this power of his to the Strangers that came to buy and sell on the Sabbath day, *Nehem*: 13 20

The Adversary brings several exceptions against this Argument which we shall propone and take off. The *First* Exception is, say they, Those were Judicial Laws, and so now are expired with their Common-wealth: *Answer*, This is a common refuge to *Sectaries* where any practice is brought from the Old Testament against them, presently they cast at it upon this account as not binding to us under the New: Therefore we shall speak so much the more unto this point: By a judicial Law is meaned a Civil Law, so the force of their Argument is this: The Civil Law of one Kingdom is not binding to another, but these were Civil Lawes belonging to that Kingdom; Therefore, they are not binding to us. To this we Answer, *First*, That they cannot say this of all the Laws instanced, particularly of that Law of the fourth Command: It is a Moral Law binding to all. *Secondly*, we Answer, the rest of these Laws are Mo-

Moral and binding to all Magistrates, yea and that for these Reasons: Because *First*, *Abraham*, and *Jacob*, and other Magistrates that were among the *Jews* did practice these Laws even before the Judicial Law was given out by *Moses*; and so they behooved to be Moral. Yea Heathen Kings that were not under the Judicial Law of *Moses*, as not being Members of their Commonwealth, when they came to the knowledge of God, they made use of their Power to suppress Idolatry; which certainly was through vertue of the Moral Law, commanding them so to do: Not the Judicial Law, that they were not under. A *Third* Answer we give, that though what is said were true, *viz.* That these Laws were Judicial: Yet it does not follow that they are not now binding to Magistrates. To understand this, there were two things in their Judicial Laws, as in our Civil Laws. Yet, there was somewhat that concerned the Kingdom in particular as that Law, that *Servants should be freed from their service at the seven years end.* And the Law of inheritance to be keept within the Tribe, and this part of the Law did fall with their Common-wealth. But their was another thing in their Judicial Laws. and that is somewhat of Common Equity belonging unto all, such as Laws for punishing sins done against the Moral Law; and in this far the Judicial Law is binding to us: because there is not a syllable in the New Testament for abrogating of it, and so must bind, being given by God. And Jesus Christ and his Apostles Reason from this Judicial Law; as in 1 *Corinth*: 9. 9.

If

It is written in the Law of Moses, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the* Ox *that treadeth out the corn*: And in several other places: so is it in the Civil Laws in other Kingdoms: as for example, That Witches should be punished by death, and burnt to Ashes, is a Civil Law in *Scotland*: Now there is somewhat there of Common Equity, to wit, that they should be punished by death; but the particular way of putting them to death, to wit, whither by strangling drowning &c. or the burning of their Bodies to Ashes, is not of Common Equity: Other Kingdoms may use another way of Execution, as pleaseth them best.

There is a *Second* Exception they bring against this Argument, say they: If their Laws were binding to us, then they would be binding according to all their circumstances; and if so, then all persons, whole Cities, yea beasts behoved to be stoned to death: For so is the Command *Deutro*: 13. Now say they, what Massacring would this be. To take off this exception, we Answer: There are two things in a *Law*, there is *first*, The substance of the *Law*; *Secondly*, The Circumstances of it: Now a *Law* may hold according to the main substance, and yet not according to these circumstances: We shall clear it in an Example, The Law of Hospitality binds all nations as to the substance of the things commanded by it, but there were some circumstances joyned with this Law, according to the nature of the people to whom it was given; such as the washing of feet, and kisses of Charity; and according to these it is not binding; And so that command, That false wor-

ship should be punished, is substantial and binding unto all; but that it should so be punished as to put Children, Women, Beasts, young and old to death, was suited according unto the temper of that People unto whom it was given, being so naturally prone to Idolatry, and therefore were by more fearful punishments to be scarred from it, and so in that respect is not binding unto others. We may add where this Law is repeated, as *Exod:* 22. 18. *Deutr:* 17. 2. 5. and *Cap:* 18 20. It is only repeated in the substance of it, and the way and manner is not mentioned. *Secondly*, we find that *Jacob* and other Magistrates who were before the Law did not Execute it according to thir Circumstances; Yea and the *Jewish* Magistrates as *Moses* and *Josiah Ezod:* 31. and 2 *King* 23, Did not tye themselves precisely to Execute the Law according to all these Circumstances; And so it remaines that though these Circumstances do not bind the Magistrate yet the Law according to its substance is yet binding.

There is a *Third* Exception they bring, say they, the Magistrate under the Old Testament had an infallible Rule whereby he might know what was Heresy and what not, to wit his consulting the Lord *by Urim and Thummim.* But the Magistrates under the New Testament have not this infallible Rule, and so it does not follow from the duty of Magistrates under the Old Testament, that the same should be done by the Magistrates under the New. To which we Answer, This exception suppones *First*, That Magistrates under the New

Testa-

Testament may punish those whom they know certainly to be Hereticks, and surely there are sundry Hereticks of this kind, which he may know as well as if he had consulted with *Urim and Thummim*. *Secondly*, this exception of theirs doth suppone, that the Magistrate under the New Testament hath no way left him how to come to know infallibly what is Heresy, what not, which is false; he hath the word of God, his Spirit speaking by it, which is more infallible than that of the Priests getting their Answer from *Urim and Tummim*: For it might be doubted whither the Priest had taken up the Answer right or not; or if he was Faithful in giving it, according as he had received it. Yea *Peter* sayes the word is more sure than any voice from Heaven, 2 *Peter* 1. *Thirdly*, This exception does suppone that the Magistrate under the Old Testament took this course of consulting with *Urim and Thummim*, for knowing who was Hereticks, Idolaters, and who not: But this is false, it was only the written Word which they consulted with, for knowing what was Heresy, what not *Isa.* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Testimony*, &c. And for the application of the rule to persons, that they might know who were the Hereticks, we never read that they consulted *Urim and Thummim*, but used a judicial Process against the person challenged, and proved the Fact by Witnesses: So *Deut.* 17. 4. There must be a scandal of Idolatry upon the man challenged, *And if it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently*, &c. And it must be proved on him by Witnesses, verse 6. *At the mouth*

of two Witnesses, or three Witnesses, shall he that is worthy of Death, be put to death.

They except *Fourthly*, That in the Infancy and Nonage of the Church God Typed out things Spiritual by things Earthly, and so those Punishments were Types of Spiritual Censures, Excommunication and Hell, and therefore are not now to be put in practice: We answer *First*, Excommunication and Damnation were things present to the Jewish Church, and so they had no Types of them. *Secondly*, This is to turn Scripture to Allegories, and by this same reason we may cast at punishments of Sins against the Second Table, as being Types of Spiritual Censures, Hell and Damnation, and there is as much ground for affirming the one as the other. This much for Arguments from the Old Testament.

We shall next hint at some Arguments from the New Testament. *First*, If so be that it were unusual for Magistrates to meddle with men in matters of Religion, then certainly Jesus Christ and his Apostles should have used this legal Defence, when the Magistrate called them before him to answer about their Doctrine, They would have said, ye have no place to challenge us for our profession, for matters of Opinion are free; but we do not hear that they declined the Judge, or used any such Defence, for sure Christ and his Apostles would have left no lawful mean unessayed.

There is a *second* Argument taken from *Rom.* 13. 4. Where speaking of the Civil Magistrate the Apostle sayeth, *For he is the Minister of God to thee for good, but*

if

If thou do that which is evil be afraid, There is set down the object of the Magistrates Power and the extent of it, and it is set down indefinitly, *upon him that doth evil.* And therefore if Hereticks, Maintainers of false Worship, be doers of evil, they fall under the Magistrates Power. Now that spreaders of Heresie are doers of evil, we did prove in the second Doctrine raised from this Verse, where we shew that Heresy and Error was as much to be eschewed, as Adultery and other Sins against the Second Table; and the Magistrate as Magistrate should put forth his zeal against them as much; and all the places commanding zeal against Error (which are not few) in the New Testament proves this, for they bind every one according to his place; the Minister according to his place, and the Magistrate according to his.

There is one Exception they make much of against this Argument, and it is this; say they, By doers of evil, cannot be meaned these that are taken with Error and Heresy, and other Sins against the First Table: And that because the evil that is here spoken of, is the evil that is mentioned in the beginning of the Verse, *But if thou do that which is evil be afraid*, It is an evil, say they, that any that were guilty of it had need to be afraid of the Magistrate because of it, and so it is not meaned the evil of Error and Heresy against Christian Truths: For the Magistrate here spoken of, is the *Roman* Emperor and Senate, who themselves were Enemies to Christian Religion, and so none needed to be afraid of them for spreading Errors, but rather for maintaining Truths; and

therefore the doers of evil here meaned, must be the controveeners of the Emperors Civil Laws, and not Hereticks and such like. For Answer, This exception is grounded on a wrong supposition; for by the Magistrate is here meaned, not only the *Roman* Magistrate, but all Magistrates in general doing their Duty as they ought. *Paul* indeed takes occasion from the *Roman* Magistrate to speak here what is the Duty of all Magistrates; and it is clear from several Circumstances of the Text: We shall mark one of them from the first words of the Text, *For he is the Minister of God to thee*, Now sure it is, this must be meaned of Magistrates in general, and not astricted only to the *Roman* Magistrate; he not being the Minister of God unto every one who was to make use of this Scripture. There is another Circumstance of the Text, proving this in the 3 Verse, *For Rulers are not a Terror to good Works.* Now sure this must be expounded of the Office of Magistracy in general, and of that which Magistrates should be, and not of the *Roman* Magistrate, who then was well known to be a Terror unto many good Works, not only unto Christian, but also unto Moral Vertues.

We shall give you only another Argument shortly taken from that Prophecy, *Revel.* 17. 6. A Prophecy that the Civil Magistrate shall bring down the *Antichrist*, and that Error of the *Roman* Religion, as a most acceptable work to God: And so the Magistrates Hand is not bound up from punishing Error and Heresy against the First Table, no more than from

punish-

puniſhing other Sins done againſt the Second Table. And this much for our Arguments brought in defence of the Truth.

In the *Third* place, we promiſed to bring forth ſome of their Arguments and ſolve them; Herein we need not ſpend much time for this being Truth, there can be nothing ſaid againſt it, which is Truth: Yet there being ſome nimble Spirits to propone Arguments which every one cannot anſwer; we ſhall ſtay a little on this *Third* point alſo.

The *Firſt* thing they object is this: If ſo be that it were the Magiſtrates Duty to puniſh Error and Hereſy then Jeſus Chriſt would have reproved the Jews for *Tollerating* the *Phariſees* and *Saduces*: But ſo it is he never reproves the Jews for ſo doing: Nothing of that kind is recorded by any of the Evangeliſts.

To this we Anſwer, *Firſt*, That it does not follow that Chriſt did not reprove the Jews, becauſe it is not written: For *John* ſayes *Chap.* 20.30. He did ſpeak many things which are not written; ſo it follows not. But *Secondly*, we ſay, although it be granted that Chriſt did not reprove them, yet it follows not that their neglect was not a Sin. For *Firſt*, by that reaſon we might ſay that the Magiſtrate ſhould not puniſh Theft, becauſe Chriſt ſpeaks nothing of the puniſhment of it in the New Teſtament: Neither, *Secondly*, reproveth he the Church for not Cenſuring them, and yet it followeth not but that they ought to be Cenſured that way. And *Thirdly*, God had revealed his Will before. And *Fourthly*, It would have been for no purpoſe to have ſtired up

the Magistrate to this Duty then, for the *Sectaries* themselves had the Power that was of it. And *Lastly*, the Jews at this time had not the Power of Civil Punishment in their Hands, but the *Romans*, and so it was not in their Power to punish.

There is a *Second* Objection which they bring from the Apostle *Paul's* words in the Epistle to the *Philipp*: 3. 15. where speaking of Differences among Christians, he sayes, *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* Say they, we see what was *Paul's* Judgement, That notwithstanding of Differences, there should be Heart Waling or Uniting; and therefore the Magistrate should not be stired up to Censure those who Err. To this we Answer, *Paul* speaks nothing there of *State Tolleration*; for then the Civil Powers were not for Christ, but of *Church Tolleration* in respect of that meekness and tenderness which Christs Servants should have in inflicting of Church Censures, for fear of breaking Love: *Secondly*, He commandeth not all Errors to be thus *Tollerated*; for so he should contradict himself in another place, where he sayes, *An Heretick after the first and second admonition reject.* And *Thirdly*, *Paul* limits that *Tolleration* that he would have here; and that in two things. *First*, As to the time, how long, *God shall reveal even this unto you.* And *Secondly*, He supposes the persons differing from them should walk with them in things wherein they differ not, according to the same rule, and so make no separation. Now it does not fol-

low

low that those who remained Obstinate in their Error should be still *Tollerated*, and that the Censure of the Church should not strick on them at all; chiefly if it be such an Error as causes Rents and Schisms, for he sayes, *Take heed to those that cause Divisions and Offences, and avoid them, Rom.* 16. 17.

Their *Third* Objection is, That this is contrary to the way the Apostles took with those that Erred, their way was to watch against them that Erred, *Acts* 20. 29. *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock.* Verse 31. *Therefore watch*----- That which the Apostle commands is, to watch against them, And in *Rom.* 16. 17. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences* ---- *and avoid them.* And in the 2 *Timoth*: 2. 24. it is said, *And the Servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.* Now, say they, this is a far other way than to stir up the Civil Magistrate against those who differ from us, This Savors not of the meek Spirit of Christ. I answer, It is the Duty of Ministers to watch against Error, and that is one mean for suppressing of Error and Heresy; but one mean destroyes not another: it does not follow that this which is in controversy is not another mean also, neither is it contrary to that meekness commanded to wait on them, more than to deliver to *Satan*, or to Curse, and Excommunicate Apostates, with that great Curse called, *Anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. 16. 22. They may as well say, It is contrary to Christs meek Spirit to establish the

Sword

Sword in the Hands of the Christian Magistrate, according to *Rom*: 13. 4. For punishing Sins against the Second Table, and so under this pretence, Adulteters, Murderers, Seducers, Thieves, and all should go free unpunished. But they do far mistake the Meekness of Jesus Christ, Christs Meekness is not to let people live in their Sin, to let vile Hereticks trample on Truth, destroying Souls: And in the mean time binding up the Hand of the Magistrate, that he dare not hinder it; this were a disrespect to Truth, and cruelty to poor Souls in danger to be carried away; which our Lord was very tender of.

There is a *Fourth* Objection from *Matth.* 13. 24. Taken from the Parable of the *Tares*; where the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man that sowed Wheat, and the wicked one comes and sowes his *Tares* among it, and both is bidden let grow till the Harvest. Now, say they, by these *Tares* is meaned Hereticks; therefore they should not be plucked up by the Sword of the Civil Magistrate. We *Answer*, If they astrict the Word *Tares* to Hereticks, in this sense, That the Sword of the Civil Magistrate should not be used against them; by the same reason they may say, that they should not be disputed against, for that is a plucking up of them also. *Secondly*, We answer, That by the *Tares* that are commanded here to be suffered let grow up to the Harvest, is no more meaned Hereticks than other Scandalous Livers: And this we shall make out from Christs expounding the Parable, Verse 41---*And they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend*,

Now

Now Hereticks are not all things that offend, other ſcandalous Livers offend alſo. *Thirdly*, By the *Tares* is meaned, *Them that do Iniquity*, verſ. 41. Now others beſides Hereticks are ſuch. And *Fourthly*, If by the *Tares* were here meaned Hereticks, then by the [*Wheat*] are meaned only the Orthodox, and ſo every man that is Orthodox ſhould ----*Shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of Heaven*, verſ. 43. But there are many who are Orthodox, who yet are evil Livers, and ſo will never go to Heaven, And therefore by the [*Wheat*] muſt only be meaned the truly Regenerate; and ſo by the [*Tares*] muſt not only be meaned Hereticks, but all other Evil-doers.

And further, By this it would follow that Hereticks ſhould not be Excommunicate, for that is a rooting out. But what can be meaned by the *Tares*, then; for whatever be meaned by them, it will follow that by this Parable *Verſe* 30. they ſhould be tollerated; and to ſay that all vile ſcandalous Perſons ſhould be tollerated, is more abſurd than that only Hereticks ſhould be tollerated. Anſwer, If we narrowly obſerve Chriſts expoſition of the Parable, we will find that part where he bids, *Let both grow together until the Harveſt*, is not exponed, although he expone the reſt, which doubtleſs he would not have omitted, if it had been his mind that we ſhould have built any Doctrine of this kind on it; therefore we ſay this is not Chriſts meaning, that he would have all men (how Godleſs and Scandalous ſoever) let alone; for that were contrary to other places of Scripture.

But that Christ is to show that when all pains are taken by Christs Officers for purging the Church, yet there will be alwayes some Hypocrites in it, and it is Christs mind, though he hath given order to Censure scandalous Offenders, yet that his Servants should not press after such a separation of the precious from the vile, as to have all the Weeds and wicked in heart to be cast out; lest when they gather out the Graceless *Tares*, they should root out also the Gracious [*Wheat*] with them.

Object. 5. There is a *Fifth* Objection from *Luk:* 9. 54. Where Christ reproves *James* and *John* for seeking fire to come down from Heaven to consume the *Samaritans*; and from this they argue: That when People refuse Christ in his Person, much less when they oppose him in his Doctrine, it is not his mind that they should be punished, but admonished and waited on: But before we Answer they must prove the Quarrel was for Religion. Now this cannot be made out for the Reason why *James* would have fire coming down from Heaven, was, because of an Act of Inhumanity in denying lodging to Christ; and that because of the great envy and hatred betwixt these two people the *Jews* and *Samaritans*. The *Second* Answer we give is, although the Quarrel had been for Religion, yet it makes not against this Doctrine; because they were wholly Idolaters, utterly ignorant of the Gospel; and our Doctrine is not that when a Nation is lying in Idolatry, that the first thing that should be done is the Magistrates sword to slay them, or to seek fire from Hea-

ven

ven to consume them: We say it is utterly unlawful to goe with fire and sword to force the *Indians* to embrace the Christian Faith; only they should be taught, instructed and restrained from spreading Blasphemies, reproaching the Son of God &c. Our Question is whether or not a People that are Members of the visible Church, that have bound themselves by Covenant to adhere to the Christian Truths, whether or not when they fall away from Truth to damnable Error, the Magistrate may make them stand to their Covenant, as *Josiah* did 2 *Chron*: 34: 31. *And he caused all that were present, to stand to it.*

Object. 6. The *Sixth* Objection is this; say they, If Magistrates may punish Error and Heresy, then he may force the Conscience; for what they hold, is as they profess, according to the light of their Conscience: Now to force the Conscience is a fearful sin, who dare meddle with Conscience but the God of Conscience. Answer: This Argument seems plausible; but for Answer to it we say, Conscience cannot be forced properly, Only we say that the Magistrate may punish for, or restrain sin in such outward motions as come from an evil informed Conscience, and if this be a sinful forcing of the Conscience then it were a sin to punish those who from Conscience killed the Apostles *John* 16, 2.——*the time cometh, that whosoever Killeth you, will think that he doeth God Service.* Yet we hope none will say the punishment of such would be a sinful forcing of the Conscience; so it were a sinful thing to punish those

those who made their Children to pass through the fire unto *Molech*, under the name of Conscience. These and many other absurdities would follow on this Tenet of theirs, that none ought to be punished for any thing they do following the indytments of a deluded Conscience. What have there not been, and yet are, Hereticks who pretend Conscience for the vilest villanies of the World? The *Jesuits* pretend Conscience for stobbing Kings and Magistrates. The *Gnosticks* to have Wives common. And ancient Hereticks hath made it a point of Conscience to practice Adultery, and some present Hereticks to Marry their Sisters, so that the nigher in Blood the Persons Married are, the Marriage is to them the more spiritual, and a number of such like villanies. Now will any think it a sinful forcing of Conscience to punish such, whatever they tatle of Conscience. But *Secondly*, To what they say, for the Magistrate to punish men for Error, is a persecuting of men for Conscience. To this we Answer: Then it should follow that God commanded sin to the Godly Magistrates under the Old Testament, for it is clear they had a command to punish men for Idolatry. *Thirdly*, if this be a persecuting of Conscience then it is a persecuting of Conscience to Preach against Error, to refute it by good Reason. To make this Consequence clear, know as there is a Persecution with the hand, so with the Tongue, and it is the bittereſt Persecution that is, called Job 5. 21. *The scourge of the Tongue*. And the mocking of Christ was one of the fearfullest Persecutions he met with

with *he trusted in God* &c. And so according to this Doctrine it were unlawful to Preach against them &c. Why? For it is a sin to persecute them for Conscience. But *Fourthly*, our Answer is; It is not the hurt inferred that makes sinful Persecution, but it is the cause for which the punishment is inflicted.

There is a *Seventh* Objection they bring against this Truth, and it is this, say they, If Magistrates were bound to punish Error and Heresy, it would lay a tye on Magistrates to know what is Truth, and what is Error; Now, say they, there are many intricate Questions about the nature of Error and Truth, which the Generality of Magistrates are ignorant of, and therefore say they according to this Doctrine, we put power in the hand of the Magistrate whereby he may punish those that profess the Truth, if the Magistrate mistake, and take Truth for Error. A dangerous Doctrine, If Magistrates turn ignorant or corrrupt. This seemeth plausible: But we shall Answer to it. If this Argument hold strong then it would follow that the Civil Magistrate hath no power to punish sins against the second Table; for there are a number of difficult Questions even about these, as in some cases of Murther, Incest, matters of false Witness: And the Lord sayeth *Deut.* 17. 8. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in Judgement, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, &c.* Which supppones there are many doubtful questions even about things Civil which the generality are ignorant of: and so it may fall out they may punish the

honest

honeſt man for the knave; and yet this doth not evert the ordinance of Magiſtracy, neither doth it follow that he hath no power to puniſh for Civil crimes: *Secondly*, they may argue as well againſt what is commanded to Maſters of Families, That he receive not an Heretick within his houſe 2 *John v.* 10. and 2 *Timoth*: 3, 6. *For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes*, &c. Rom: 16. 17, 18. *Now I beſeech you Brethren mark them which cauſe diviſions----and avoid them. &c.* By all which he ſuppoſeth certainly they have ſome knowledge to judge who are Hereticks and who not; elſe how could they eſchew them; and ſo they may argue as well againſt theſe commands, as againſt this Doctrine: For may they ſay, this is to put it on Maſters of Families to know who are Hereticks, who not, to know what is Truth and what not, and this the generality of Maſters of Families are ignorant of; and ſo a power put on them to barr the door on honeſt men, in ſtead of an Heretick: Now when they free theſe Commands from theſe conſequences we ſhall free this Doctrine from them alſo. *Thirdly*, Neither the word nor this Doctrine putteth a power on Magiſtrates to puniſh Truth, their power is only to puniſh Error: They may indeed ſo abuſe their power, but it followeth not that therefore they have no power to puniſh Error: no more than becauſe that a Godleſs Magiſtrate as *Nero* was, may abuſe his power to oppreſs, Murther honeſt Citizens, and do other Acts of Injuſtice againſt the ſecond Table; that therefore the Magiſtrate hath no power to puniſh

nish Theeves, Robbers, Murderers, because either through mistake or wickedness he may abuse it to punish innocent Men; whatever remedy is left for the Magistrates abusing of his power under the one, the same is left under the other, as in some cases suffering, in others resisting.

There is an *Eighth* Objection they have against this Truth, say they, we make the mean unproportionate to the end, no outward force can convert a man and bring him to Christ, it makes men but Hypocrites; the blast of the Kings horn or outlawry can make no man a member of Christs body, that must be done willingly, not by compulsion, and this were to cudgell People out of their opinions. To this we Answer, That our Doctrine doth not hold forth that the power of the Magistrate is any mean to convert Souls: Only this it doth hold forth that the power of the Magistrate is a mean to restrain men from doing sinful Acts against Christ; as *Asa* made use of his Civil Power to keep down Idolatry, it puts People indeed on the profession of outward Obedience, and to this it is very proportioned. And therefore *Secondly*, Though the blast of the Kings horn cannot make a Member of Christs invisible Body, by working Grace; Yet it may be a mean in its own kind for making a Member of the Church visible, by with-holding from sinful Acts, and putting them on Acts of outward Obedience. A *Third* Answer we give, That the power of the Magistrate doth not make men Hypocrites of it self, but through the corruption of Man's heart, who makes

himself an Hypocrite. The end of this ordinance, what it is in it self is set down in *Deut*: 13. 11. *And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is, among you.* That is the end, that they being moved by their Example, should abstain from such like worke: but that they do this Hypocritically, is from their corrupt nature, who fears him more who can kill the Body, than him who after he hath killed the Body can cast both Soul and Body into Hell. We Answer lastly if this were a good Argument why a Magistrate should not make use of his power to punish for false Doctrine because throw occasion thereof many turn Hypocrites: then say we, It should follow that the Magistrate should not make use of his power to punish Incests, Adulteries, Murders, Thefts &c. because it is the occasion of many Hypocrites, who abstain more from such, for the fear of punishment, than for the fear of God; yea according to this Doctrine it should follow, That the Preaching of the word should be unlawful, because through the occasion of it many turn Hypocrites under it.

There is a *Ninth* Objection they have against this Truth, and it is this, say they, By this power we give to the Magistrate to punish Error and Heresy, we give him the Power of Church Judicatories, to judge of Doctrines, Error and Heresy. In Answer to this we shall speak more fully in the *Erastian* Doctrine, only for the present this giving Power to the Magistrate to punish Error and Heresy, gives him not a publick Judgement to discern what is Error,

and

and what not, as a Judge in Church matters; but only a Judgement of Discretion in relation to his own Act: As for Example, when the Lord gives Power to Masters of Families, not to let Hereticks come into their House, it is not a putting the Power of Church Judicatories in their Hands.

IV. The last thing we promised to speak to you of, was to give you some use of this: And the *First* is, to reprove those who think Opinions are free, and that none ought to be punished for such, We grant as we said that there would be a difference amongst Errors, some more damnable, some less; and so to be less punished: and there is a difference to be put amongst persons, some are seduced, some whose Conscience is Seared, some venting their Darkness, some seeking Light: In such there should be a difference observed. Again the Magistrate is to deal one way with a Community, another way with some persons, before it come to such an hight. And *Lastly*, He is to deal otherwise with Errors that cannot be mantained without troubling the Peace of the Church and State, and those that break not Love, nor strike not at any material point of Truth; the *last* happily may be Tollerate, if the Maintainers of them do not evidence contempt: But not so the *first*. These and such like Distinctions may be to qualify this Power; but to deny it altogether, is the most damnable Doctrine that ever was vented, the Devil cannot take a shorter course to undoe Religion, and there can be no heart zealous for God but he must loath it; and therefore look so on it: Think

not, what is that to you what others do, if ye get leave to serve God your self: Is that all your zeal for God, that if ye get leave to serve him, ye care not that all beside you Spit on his Face, and serve the Devil.

Use 2. Hence see what an Account those Magistrates have to make, who make no use of their Power this way for God, if they get their own Houses built, cares not for his, if Rebellion against themselves be curbed, cares not for the curbing of Rebellion against God. This was the Sin of the Parliament of *England*, though they entred into a Covenant with the most high God, That they would suppress Error and Heresy, they never employed their Power that way; and that because they durst not for angring of their Army, and therefore God hath suffered their Army to overturn them, and set themselves and whom they please in their place; And now they by their practice give *Tolleration* to all; and this is the way to strengthen them. I say in the Name of the Lord, if they repent not, it shall be the way to ruine them, A people Swearing in their low condition to root out Heresy, *&c.* And God blessing them from that day; and within a few years carrying themselves as if they had Sworn to do the contrary, to suffer all, encourage all, invite all the Devils in Hell to vent what Blasphemies they please; and for their encouragement to give them Surety that no Power in *Brittain* shall hinder them, Was there ever such an affront done to God? Think ye that he will sit with it? No, if he should make the one half aven-

gers

gers of a broken Covenant againſt the other. He will not. It is noted of *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 14. 5. Gods way, to keep Magiſtrates ſure, and their Kingdoms quiet, is to be zealous againſt falſe Worſhip: No, but (ſay they) the way is not to anger Hereticks, they are the ſureſt Pillars of our Commonwealth, but woe to, and will be to, that Common-wealth that is builded on ſuch Pillars. And if *Scotland*, or any party in it, joyn with them on theſe terms, our woe is but coming. He is a jealous God chiefly in the matter of his Service, as is clear from the Second Command.

The *Third* uſe is, If this be an Ordinance of God to put Power in the Magiſtrates hand to puniſh Error, it ſhould make you fear at Error and labour to be grounded in the Truth: For we ſee Error is a ſin that God hates, and it is a ſin that God will have the Magiſtrate to puniſh, and ſo a ſin that he himſelf will puniſh if the Magiſtrate do neglect it. It is natural to men to think, if they can live a good Life, it is the leſs matter what be their Opinion; but the Lord Judges not ſo; for as he will have other ſins puniſhed by the Magiſtrate, ſo he will have theſe puniſhed alſo. And ſuch as he uſually puniſheth himſelf, by fearful Plagues, when the Magiſtrate neglecteth his Duty, in puniſhing other ſins, ſo doth he in thoſe. We might ſpeak much from Hiſtory of fearful Judgements ſent immediatly by God upon Hereticks, but we ſhall here cloſe.

SECT.

SECT: III.

A BRIEF REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF Erastianism.

Head I.

That there is a Church Government held forth in Scripture.

HAving thus shown that the Doctrine of *Toleration is not of God*, I proceed to Demonstrate this also in some other of the most Dangerous Errors of the Times; We shall begin *first* with these Errors which are about the *Government of the Church*; and that because the Government

ment of the Church is the hedge of the Doctrine; for if once the Government be brangled or shaken the wild Boar of the Wilderness cometh in easily and corrupteth the Doctrine: therefore it is that the Devils main design hath been against the Government of the Church to blast and storm this Wall on all Hands.

The summe of what we have to say in this is, to make out these four points: *First*, That there is a Government appointed by Christ in his Church distinct from the Civil Government. *Secondly*, We shall show that this Government is not in the hands of the Civil Magistrate, but in the hands of Christs own officers, which he hath appointed for Governing his house, By inflicting of Church Censures, enacting of Church canons, so as they are not to act by derived power from the Magistrate, and Appeals are not to be made from them to the Magistrate. *Thirdly*, we shall endeavour to prove, That this power of Church Government is not in the hands of private Christians, or the community of the Faithful: but in the hand of Christs own Officers, Ministers and Elders. And *Lastly*, We shall endeavour to prove that this Authority and Government is not in the hand of particular Congregations or particular Elderships, Independently from other Judicatories above them: but that this power is given to them, so as they must be subject to Superior Judicatories. In which propositions we will meet with these Errors that are most dangerously opposite to Church Government at this time.

The *First* two propositions are contrary to the Doctrine of *Erastians*, and the last two are contrary to the Doctrine of *Independents* (as they are commonly designed) *First*, we shall engage with *Erastianism* and our Scope in this shall be as in the former, to show that however it pretend to the Spirit, yet when it is brought to the tryal it will be found *not to be of God.*

This Doctrine or Error hath its name from the prime Author of it called *Erastus*, a Doctor of Medicine who upon some discontent did first vent it: to wit, That Ministers should only meddle with Preaching; but should have no power to meet in Church Judicatories, Sessions, Presbyteries, or such like, nor should they punish Scandalous sins with Church Censures, Such as Suspension or Excommunication; But that all power whatsoever in a Nation, both in Church and State, should be in the hand of the Civil Magistrate. This Doctrine so soon as it was vented, did get, and does yet get many followers, chiefly among state Divines, and Christians that know more of wordly policy than Christian simplicity, so that in a short time if God prevent it not, it is like to swallow up all other Controversies about Church Government, so plausible and pleasing it is to the powers of the World, who cannot well endure to have Christ Reigning besides them. *Psalm.* 2. 3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* Both *Sectaries* and *Malignants* do aggree in this Error, to take the power of Discipline out of the Churches hand's.

hand's. The spiritual power of Church Censures in the hands of Christs officers, is an eye sore to both of them.

But to come nearer to the point, There are two heads of this *Erastian* Doctrine which we shall labour to refute. The *First*, is most gross, whereby they affirm, That there is no particular Church Government set down in Scripture; In a word, that there is no Government in the Church by divine right; but that this Government is left in the hands of the Civil Magistrate, whether to erect any Government at all in the Church, or not: or if he please to erect one, That he may establish That Government which suits best the well-being of the Civil state: So that according to this Doctrine the Civil Magistrate may establish *Episcopacy* this year, the next year he may establish *Presbytery*, and the third year he may cast both and establish *Independency*; And if he like, He may find out a Government different from any of these, and establish it. The *Second Erastian* Error is this, whereby they affirm whatever Government be in the Church (whether grounded in Scripture or not) that according to Scripture it is in the hands of the Civil Magistrate and that he is the chief fountain of Church Government.

In opposition to the first Error we lay down this Conclusion, which (God willing) we shall make good, *That Jesus Christ the King and head of his Church hath established a particular form of Church Government in his word, which to alter is not in the power of any State whatsoever.* He hath set down a way for pu-

punishing Scandals, for inflicting Church Censures, Enacting Church canons; And hath not left this in the Arbitriment of Kings or Parliaments to set down any Government they please. In prosecuting which point we shall follow that Method we keeped in refuting the Doctrine of *Tolleration.* We shall *First* clear the State of the Question. *Secondly,* We shall bring Arguments to confirm the Truth. *Thirdly,* We shall Answer these Arguments the Adversary brings against the Truth: And so we shall apply all to Use.

I. And *First,* for clearing the State of the Question, take thir two assertions: *First,* we do not affirm that all the Circumstantials of Church Government is set down expresly in the word; But only *first,* That all the substantial parts of Church Government have a warrand in the word and are therein so fixed and established, as they are unalterable by any State whatsoever. And *Secondly,* As to the Circumstantials that relate to this Government; we say, they are set down under general Rules, sufficient for the ordering of them: *such as, let all things be done in order and to edification.* Our *Second* Assertion is, we are not to enter here to show, what is the particular kind of Government that is appointed in the word, and what things falls under the power of Church Governours, and in what relation they are to handle them, what are the nature of these Censures, and how in all these things they differ from the Civil power: It would take long time to clear these. The thing we aim at is only this general: *That Jesus Christ the King*

King of his Church and Lord of his House hath set down in his word a particular way for Governing of his House distinct from the Civil, which is not in the power of any State to alter. We proceed now to Arguments for confirming this Truth.

II. The first Argument is this, If so be that under the Old Testament, there was a particular form of Church Government different from the Civil, set down in the word; then there must be also the like set down under the New; but, so it is that there was a particular way set down under the Old Testament for Governing the Church: Therefore, there must be the like set down under the new. For making out this Argument, there are *two* things we have to clear. The *First* is, That there was such a Government as this under the Old Testament warranted by the word. The *Second* thing to be cleared, is, that therefore and upon the same Reason there must be also the like under the New. For proving of the *First*, that there was a particular Government of the Church different from the Government of the state under the Old Testament, We shall clear two things. *First*, That they had Church Judicatories different from the Civil Judicatories; And to prove this we shall cite two places of Scripture: The *First* is, in 2 *Chron.* 19. 8, 9, 10. Ye may read the place at leasure; but there are these things in it proving that there was a Church Judicatory distinct from the Civil. *First*, We see that there is a Judicatory made up of the Church-men of the Levits and Priests, in verse 8. *Secondly*, We

see

see that the things they judged of were spiritual matters distinguished from Civil things by calling the the first sort, *The matters of the Lord*, And the Second, *Matters of the King*, v. 11. *Thirdly*, We see that in this Judicatory a Church-man was Moderator, in the 11 verse *And behold* Amariah *the chief Priest is over you.* And *Fourthly*, We see that the sentence of the Court was Execute by Church-men in the end of the 11 vers-----*Also the* Levits *shall be officers before you.* All which being laid together, makes out clearly that under the Old Testament there was a Church Judicatory different from the Civil. The Second place is in *Jeremiah.* 26. 8. 9. 10 Where we have these things to make out the present point. *First*, We see that there were two Judicatories in the 8 v. There is a Judicatory of the Priests and Prophets condemning *Jeremiah* as a false Prophet: again in the 10. and 11. v. We see there is a Civil Judicatory made up of States-men *When the Princes of* Judah *hard these things, then they came up from the Kings house*-----&c. So it is plain they had a Church Judicatory for Church matters, as well as a Civil Judicatory for Civil matters.

The *Second* thing that we are to speak to in order to the proving of the first point, to wit, That there was a Government of the Church different from that of the State among the *Jews*, is this, that as they had Church Judicatories different from the Civil, so they had also Church Censures different from Civil punishments, as we have amongst us. And *First*, publick confession of Scandalous sins was in use

use among them, we shall clear it from one place of Scripture Ezra 10. 10. 11. *And* Ezra *the Priest stood up*, and said unto them, *Ye have transgressed----Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your Fathers*, &c. There is confession of sin appointed for a fault that was Scandalous to wit, their *Marrying with strange Wives*. Now this confession was not only private to God, nor on a Fast day, but a personal publick acknowledgment, after particular Examination of all one by one. And we gather this from the 13. v. where it is said----*Neither is this a work of one day or two*---&c. And in the 16. v. *Three moneths was spent on the business*, so that this was a personal acknowledgment given by every one of them, after the Examination of their guilt, as we do in our Church Judicatories. *Secondly*, Besides this publick Confession they had the Censure of suspending Scandalous men from the Ordinances, as we do suspend from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; we will find this in *David* his appointing of the offices of the Priests. Among the rest it is recorded of *Jehoiada's* 2 *Chron.* 23. v, 19. *And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in.* They were suspended from the Ordinances because of their uncleaness, And for the neglect of this the Priest's are reproved in *Ezek.* 22. v, 26. *Her Priests have violated my Law, and have prophaned my Holy things: they have put no difference between the unclean and clean neither between the Holy and prophane.* They let all come rushing together to the Ordinances: And for this they are reproved.

proved. *Thirdly*, They had among them the sentence of Excommunication, which is set down under the name of *Cutting off from among the People*. And in the new Testament it is expressed by the name of *casting out of the Synagogue*, which certainly was Excommunication. It is a Ridiculous alledgence that they say, by *cutting off*, was meaned the inflicting of Temporal death by the sword of the Magistrate; for the uncircumcised Man-child, he that had touched a dead Body and did not wash after it, were to be cut off; now who would think that such were to be put to death.

The *Second* thing to be made out is, That therefore there must be a Church Government under the New Testament, seing it was so under the Old; and the Reason is, because no necessity can be alleadged for a Church Government then, but the same necessity is now. Is not the Church a mixed multitude now, as well as then? is there not as great need to separate betwixt the precious and the vile now, as then? Is not the Church now a feild of Wheat and Tares as well as then? Is there not need to keep the Ordinances pure now, as then, by the fence of Government? Is there not need now to suppress sin as well as then? Is not Christ perfect in all his House as well as *Moses*? Yea, in a word there can nothing be alleadged for a necessity to have a Church Government under the Old Testament, but the same may be brought to prove the necessity of it under the New.

The *Second* Argument we bring to prove this point

point is taken from the native end of Church Government which is spiritual, to wit----*For the edifying of the Body of Christ*: Ephes: 4. 12. *To gain the Soul of our offended Brother to Repentence* Matth: 18. 15. It is----*that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* 1 *Corinth.* 5, 5. So the end of the Church Government is a spiritual end, and therefore it must have a Divine Original: Church Government whose end is spiritual can be no humane Ordinance, for such produceth no supernatural effects; therefore it must have a higher warrand for it than that of the Magistrate.

Our *Third* Argument is taken from this, that all the substantials of Church Government are set down expresly in Scripture, from which we make this Argument: That Government whose substantial parts are all set down expresly in Scripture, the Magistrate hath no power to alter it, or put an other in its place; but so it is that all the substantial parts of Church Government are set down expresly in Scripture: Therefore, the Magistrate hath no power to alter it. The thing we have to make out in this Argument is this, That all the substantials of Church Government are set down in Scripture; And to clear this we shall reckon up *five* things. *First* That Church officers have their warrand from Scripture *Thess*: 5. 12. 1 *Tim*: 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and Doctrine.* There is a Ruler, or an officer with power to rule, established in Gods house. What they say, That by

Ruling

Ruling there is meaned *Preaching*, because Ministers guide People by Preaching, is a frivolous Exception: and that because of what is in the end of the Verse--*especially they who labour in the word and Doctrine.* So labouring, in the word and Doctrine, is one thing, and *Ruling* is another thing, and not one and the same, as their Exception affirmeth. But we shall find a more clear place for it in *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves* There are Officers established with power to Rule, and the People are commanded to submit and give Obedience to them, and so there are Rulers, Officers established in Gods Church. *Secondly*, The Courts and Judicatories of the Church have a warrand in Gods word; and for this see *Matth.* 18. 17. 18. *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church---Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven*---The Adversaries are so shamless that they say, by the *Church* is here meaned, the Civil Magistrate, and that the complaint should be made to them: But it is sure the Civil Magistrate is not here meaned. And to prove it, The Judicatory here meaned is that whereof the Apostles should be Members, and therefore in v. 16. It is said *whatever ye* [to wit the Apostles] *shall bind on earth*---&c. Now sure it is Jesus Christ gives no power to his Ministers to sit in Civil Courts, and to judge of Civil business. The *third* substantial of Church Government that hath warrand in the word is, the subordination of lesser Judicatories to greater;

er; and this is warranted in *Act*: 15, 2. Where *Paul* and *Barnabas* come up from *Antioch*, to a General Council at *Jerusalem* (because the controversie in hand could not be ended at *Antioch*) where there is a Court with power, They determine the Question, Censure the *Schismaticks*, giving them the name of Lyars v. 24. The *Fourth* substantial of this Government set down in Scripture is, the order of proceeding in relation to Censure. 1. By private Admonition, Then more publick *Matth*: 18. 15. The *fifth* thing is, The nature and kind of thir Censures, which are not bodily, as taking away the life; but spiritual, to wit, Admonitions, reproofs, Casting out of the Church, *Matth*: 18 17. --*Let him be unto thee as an Heathen and a Publican.* Now from all this, It evidently appears that Christ hath set down all the Substantials of Church Government in his word: And seeing he hath done so, what man dare alter it, taking any prudential way for the good of the Church at his pleasure: Yea there is a charge given to preserve all these inviolable till Christs coming; 1 *Tim*: 5. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.* So that which Christ hath set down concerning the Government of his house is unalterable by any person whatsomever, till the coming of Jesus Christ. So much for the third Argument.

There is a *Fourth* and it shall be our last, which is this, If so be that Christ hath left his House without

any particular Government, only referring it to the Civil State, to appoint what Government they please, it would reflect much on the wisdome of Jesus Christ; For the Church visible is his Kingdom, his House, his Vinyard his Garden; And shall we say that he hath appointed no Laws to Govern no Courts to guide this Kingdom, but left it to the Civil Magistrate, to appoint by whom and how it pleaseth him best: A King of Clay would not do so with his Kingdom, much less he who is the King of Glory. This for the Arguments to confirm the Truth, we shall in the next place Answer their Objections.

III. The *First* is (say they) from 2 *Tim*: 3, 16. The word of God is able to make a man perfect; and therefore there is no need of Government. We Answer, This same Argument may as well strick against Magistracy. But *Secondly*, We say (which we made already appear) That the Government of the Church is grounded on the Word; Hence their Argument proveth not, because the Government of the Church is a part of the Word, and is commanded by it; and so it is not an adding to it: But if they say the bare Preaching of the word is enough; We Answer, Not to detract any thing from the word Preached, which is the mean appointed by God to save Souls, yet the Exercise of Dicipline is necessary also. It is necessary (we say) for *Three* Reasons. 1. To keep the Ordinances of God from being polluted by the rushing foreward of Dogs, and Scandalous Persons. All the Preaching that can be, to bid Scanda-

Scandalous men keep back, will not do. Then 2. It is necessary for keeping the Church from being infected by the contagion of Scandalous men. Hence sayeth the Apostle *Paul, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*; Therefore put the incestous man from among you. 3. It is necessary for the good of the Soul that is censured: So in the 2 *Thes*: 3. 14------ *note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* And 1 *Cor*: 5. 5. Excommunication serveth for *the Destruction of the Flesh*, that is, To tame and mortify its Lusts: And so although the word be only the necessary mean for the converting of Souls, yet it doth not follow that the Government of the Church should not be exercised, to wit, that the word may work the better.

The *Second* Objection is this, That all the Arguments we have to establish a Church Government by Divine right are taken from the Churches practice in the Apostles time, and commands given them; but it does not follow that what was then, should be a rule now; and they give this as the Reason of the difference; because the Magistrate was then a Pagan, and so would not meddle with these things; but the case is now otherwise when the Magistrate is turned Christian. We Answer *First*, By this it is granted, that Church Government was an institution of Christ, at least in the primitive times, Now sure it is that every thing instituted by Christ sayeth on a perpetual obligation, except Christ in his word hath set a period, that it should be only so long: So if this Argument of theirs have any force, they

must show from Scripture that Christ hath appointed this period for Church Government, so as it should be only in force under an Idolatrous Pagan Magistrate: And that the Power of it should cease under the Christian Magistrate: But no place of Gods word can be given for the proof of this; But on the contrary a Command is given, That which Christ delivered to the Apostles, 1 *Timoth.* 6. 14. *Should be keeped to his second coming*, And therefore it remains a perpetual Ordinance. *Secondly*, We Answer, That if this were true, then the Case of the Church should be worse under the Christian than the Pagan Magistrate; If so be that under the one, they have an Intrinsecal Power to purge and keep his Church free from Scandals, but not under the other, would not this be hard. *Thirdly*, We Answer, That the reasons for which the Church did exercise Government, in the primitive times, were taken from common Equity, and so are binding to the Church at all times. We find this 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. Where a command is given to exercise Discipline by Excommunicating of the Incestuous person: The reasons given are, *First*, The good of the Mans Soul *verse* 5. *Secondly*, The good of the Church to be keeped from Infection, *verse* 6. Now the Church is bound to see to these at all times.

We come to the *Fourth* thing, which is a word of *Use*: And it serves 1. To reprove those who think debates about the Government of the Church useless and of no value: To what purpose is it (say they) what be the Government, and who governs, if sin be

be punished, and the Word Preached. I answer' it is of much moment: For, from what is said it appears that Church Government is an Ordinance of God, a part of his word, and they who evert it, or gives way to the everting of it, give way to evert a part of the Word of God; yea to the bringing down of the Government of Christs own House. It is a point of Truth that concerns no less than the Royal Diadem of Christ, and all who have got good of Truth are bound to stand for it; yea it is more than an ordinary Truth: The question is concerning Christs Kingdom, if he have a Kingdom of his own distinct from the Kingdoms of the World; If he shall have his own Laws, Office-bearers, Courts, Censures, according to his will in his Word; or if all he hath left to that purpose be to scratched out, and the Civil Magistrate to appoint what Laws, Rules, Courts, he pleaseth in Christs House: So it is a point relating to his Kingdom, a Doctrine to be avowed, and a point of Truth worth the Suffering for, and which some have suffered for and boasted in it, yea it is a point of Truth that hath this advantage beyond other Truths, That Christ hath suffered for it himself in his own person, for it's clear that this was the only point he was accused on by *Pilate*, and he avowed it *Luke* 23. 3. That he had a Kingdom, *though not of the World, yet in the World.* We shall find, that this point was chiefly laid to Christs charge in *John* 18. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. And this was the point that was driven home by the Jews on Christ, *John* 19. It was his Ditty on the Cross,

Jesus Christ of Nazareth *King of the Jews.* And this was the point that straitned *Pilate* most, and put him to it to make Christ suffer, *Joh.* 19. So this point hath this advantage, that in a special manner Christ suffered as a Martyr for it: Should any then think it a little thing to suffer for? God forbid. Yea we may think it an Honour.

The *Second* Use, If so be that Church Government is an Ordinance of God, then those intrusted with it, such as Ministers and Elders, would discharge it as Service to God, so as to be countable to him; there should be an other frame of Spirit, when Men are in Church Judicatories, than when they are in Civil Judicatories: These are Ordinances of Men, thir of God, and require more than a common frame of Spirit. Alas (we may say) for the Unministerial like Carriage of Ministers and Elders, may justly provoke God to thro us out altogether.

A *Third Use* of this point is, That seeing Church Government is an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, then ye that are people should obey and submit to those that are over you in the Lord, otherwise if it be not thus looked on it may provoke the Lord to remove the Hedge from us; and if this were, God knoweth what we would be: we are evil now, but if people got leave to do every thing that seemeth good in their own eyes, we could not but be much worse: Ye see what ye are with it, but know not what ye will be without it. And so much for the first Head of *Erastian* Doctrine.

Head

Head II.

The Power of Church Government belongeth not to the Civil Magistrate.

THe *Second* Head of *Erastian* Doctrine, which we are to prove not to be of God, is, That whereby they affirm, That all the Power of Church Government is in the Hands of the Civil Magistrate. And here there are some differences among themselves: some giving him all Power to dispence all Church Ordinances, and this as a Magistrate, without a Call from the Church; and so to Preach and to Administrate the Sacraments: Others again content themselves to ascribe to him only a Power of Jurisdiction to make Church Laws, to inflict Church Censures. And herein they also differ, some puting this Power wholly in the Hand of the Magistrate: Others conjunctly with the Ministers; a third placeth it in him as the Fountain, and in Church-men but as his Deputes; so that they are to act by vertue of a Commission from him, and meddle only with these things that he gives them Warrand for, and so to meddle with them as to be lyable to an Appeal to him as the supream Judge in all

Church matters. We contrary to all these shall make out this following Assertion: To wit, *That the Civil Magistrate as a Magistrate hath no Power either to Preach, or Administrate the Sacraments, nor yet to make Church Laws, or inflict Church Censures, either by himself or others as his Deputes; but all this power doth belong wholly to Church Officers, Ministers, and Elders: Which power they are to execute without Dependency on the Civil Magistrate; so that they are not lyable to Appeals to his Court, neither hath he Power to rescind the Sentence pronounced by them.*

In following out of this point, we shall go on as in the former, we shall *First* clear the state of the question. *Secondly*, We shall bring Arguments for the Truth. *Thirdly*, We shall bring their Arguments against the Truth, and refute them. *Fourthly*, We shall apply the whole to some use.

I. *First*, For clearing the State of the Question take this assertion; that however we do not give the Civil Magistrate Power of Church Discipline, or the power of governing the Church, yet we give him much Power about Church matters. Our Divines following the word of God, give the Christian Magistrate a threefold Power about Church matters. 1. A defensive protecting Power. 2. A ruling Power. And 3. a Punishing Power.

First, They give him a Defending Power, and that is grounded on that Promise made to the Church in *Isa.* 49. 23. *And Kings shall be thy Nursing Fathers*, &c. By this Power the Christian Magistrate is to do *three* things. 1. By his Power he

is

is to encourage, countenance, and advance by his Authority and example the publick exercise of all Gods Ordinances; and so defend the Church in her Liberties that are given to her by Christ: This was the practice of those Godly Kings under the Old Testament: So did *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. to verse 18. and *Jehoshaphat*. 2 *Chron.* 19. 8, 9, 10, 11. And other Godly Kings. They encouraged others in the Service of God; they countenanced them, and by their Authority and example allured others to the practice of Godliness; which Power Christian Magistrates have yet. 2. By this Power they are to provide the Church with all external Necessaries; as publick convenient Places of meering for Gods Worship, and publick Mantainance for the Church Officers, *&c* This we see was *Hezekiah's* practice 2 *Chron.* 31. 4. *Moreover, he commanded the People that dwelt in* Jerusalem, *to give the portion of the Priests, and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the* Law *of the Lord.* And it was *Josiah's* practice 2 *Chron.* 34. *He repaired the House of the Lord*, The publick place of Gods Worship. 3. By this defending Power of the Christian Magistrate, he is to remove all outward Impediments lying in the way of God's Worship, such as Prophanity, Idolatry, Heresy, and Blaspemy, as we did prove at length in the former Controversy.

Secondly, We give to the Christian Magistrate a Ruling Power about Church matters: By this Power 1. He may convocate Church Judicatories, command them to meet, and to enact Canons, and to make rules for Governing the Church; although he

he cannot make Church Laws himself: So pious Magistrates under the Old Testament did call Synods, as *David* 1 *Chron.* 23. 2. And he *gathered together all the Princes of* Israel, *with the Priests and Levites.* 2. By this Power the Christian Magistrate is to confirm the acts of the Church Judicatories, and to give the force of a Civil Law: Only herein we differ from the Papists, They say the Magistrate should do this blindly, he is only (say they) the Churches Echo to say *Amen* to what they conclude: But we say the Magistrate is not to do this blindly, we allow to him a judgement of Discretion to try whether what they conclude be right or not, and accordingly he is to add his Authority or not; and yet this makes him not a Judge in Church matters, but only a Judge of his own Actions. 3. By this Power the Magistrate is to take Inspection of the Carriage of Church Judicatories, so that all things be rightly managed by them; so as if they should conclude a point of Injustice, though he may not rescind their Act himself; yet he may command them to resume the the matter, take it to their second Thoughts, give Reasons to the contrair, exhort them to their Duties from time to time, until the matter be rightly concluded: Only it is still the Church Judicatory that must rescind their own Act. By this ruling Power the Magistrate may do much: When the Church is corrupt he may reform it: That is, when Church Judicatories are all wrong, that they will do nothing for his upstirring, In this case the Magistrate may lay the Church Judicatory aside, and do that himself which

which they should do: His Power in this case is extraordinary, he may reform by his own Power, as Godly *Josiah* did 2 *King* 23. And as *Asa* and *Jehoshaphat*. At such a time Magistrates may do much this way: But extraordinary Cases are not to be made ordinary Rules.

Thirdly, We give to the Magistrate a *Coactive* punishing power about Church-matters, and by this power we affirm that all the persons of Church-men, and their goods are lyable to the Civil Magistrate in things Civil: According to that, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers* (contrary to what the *Papists* teach) so that if a Church-man should commit a Civil crime, the Magistrate by his own power may punish him; as *Solomon* did *Abiathar*. 2. By this coactive punishing power he may see to the Observation of Divine and Church Laws, and punish those that are contemners of them by Civil punishments. There are several examples of this; as that of *Josiah* *He made all the People stand to the Covenant*. Now, by all that is said ye may easily perceive, that *We give to* Cæsar *that which is* Cæsars; although we give him not what is *Gods*: We give him much power about the Church, but not the power of Governing the Church. We shall clear this by a *simile*, how the Magistrate may have much power about Church-matters; although not power of Governing the Church: Ye know the Civil Magistrate, or Church Sessions, have much power about matters belonging to husband and wife, Parents and Children, so as to censure and punish them

for

for their unnatural carriage towards each other, and to see every one do duty to another; and yet neither the Civil Magistrate nor Church Session hath Marital or Husbandly power over the Wife, or Parental power over the Children so as they might challenge the same duties from them, to be done to themselves, which the Wife oweth to her Husband, or the Children to the Parents; the Husband and Parents only have that power: So it is here, The Magistrate hath much power about Church matters, but he hath no Church-power properly so called; that belongeth only to Christs own officers. *Secondly*, For clearing of the question take this Assertion, what we deny to the Christian Magistrate in the power of Governing the Church, we deny it to him only as a Magistrate; for so we laid it down in the conclusion to be proved, *A Magistrate as a Magistrate hath no power in Governing the Church*, otherwise if a Christian Magistrate be chosen an Elder, he hath power of Church Government, being joyned with the rest: Only we say as a Magistrate he hath no power to Govern the Church.

II. We come to the *Second* thing which is our Arguments to confirm the Truth, And the *first* Argument is this That Jesus Christ hath given no warrand to the Civil Magistrate for the Government of his Church, and therefore he hath no right to it. 1. We say, that Christ in his word hath given no warrand to the Magistrate for Governing his Church: And this will appear from all these places where mention is made of any warrand given to any, of Church Go-

Government; There is no word of the Christian Magistrate in any of them, only mention is made of Apostles, Ministers and Elders: so in *Matth:* 16. 19. The power of Governing the Church *to bind and loose* is given to *Peter* in the name of the rest of the Apostles, but no word of the Civil Magistrate. And *Matth:* 18. 17. the power of Excommunication is given to the Church *and if he shall neglect to hear them let him be*--&c. The Church of Ministers and Elders hath the power, but no word of the Civil Magistrate *And* so in *Timoth:* and *Titus* the scope of which Epistles is to instruct Ministers concerning the right way of Governing the Church, what is spoken there, is spoken to them and to Ministers succeeding to them, but there is no mention of the Civil Magistrate. And therefore we may conclude he hath no right from Jesus Christ for Governing the Church: And what he would challenge of that kind is but an usurpation and intruding unto that, to which he hath no right.

Our *second* Argument is, If the power of the Church Government belong to a Magistrate as a Magistrate, then it belongeth to every Magistrate but this were absurd. We say, if the power of Governing the Church did belong to a Magistrate as a Magistrate, then it should belong to every Magistrate, for whatever belongs to one as such, belongs to all such. Now this hath many absurdities following on it; For by this Rule Heathen Magistrates might have power of Church Government, and be Church Governours, which were absurd; For they

are

are not Church Members. Then *Secondly*, Women might be Church Governours, for they may be Magistrates in some cases, and yet they may not speak in the Church. Yea *Thirdly*, By this it should follow that Children not come to age might have the power of Church Government, for they may be Magistrates, when Magistracy goeth by succession; Now Children cannot have the power of Church Government for that power is not to be Exercised by deputies, but by the persons themselves who are intrusted with it.

A *Third* Argument to confirm the Truth is this, That Magistrates as Magistrates are not Church Officers; And therefore they have no power to Govern the Church. The consequence is clear, for if Magistrates have power to Govern the Church, then they must be Church Officers, if any thing make a man a Church Officer, then power to Govern the Church will do it, for State Government and State Officers are *Relata*, and have a mutual Relation one to another, and so must Church Government and Church Officers have a mutual Relation one to another: But in the next place it is evident, That a Magistrate as a Magistrate is no Church Officer, and that because among all that roll, set down in the word of God, wherein Christ reckons up his Officers, there is no mention made of the Civil Magistrate. *Ephes*: 4. There is a roll verse 11. *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists and some Pastors, and teachers.* But no word of the Civil Magistrate: and in *Rom*: 12, 6, 7. There

is

is an other roll of Church officers, but no word of of the Civil Magistrate---*whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of Faith: Or Ministery, let us wait on our Ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching*: &c. But neither in this place or any other is there any mention of the Civil Magistrate: Only some of our Adversaries mutter somewhat of 1 *Cor*: 12. 28. That by *Governments* there mentioned is meaned the Christian Magistrate, but it is easily refuted, for the text speaketh evidently of such Governours, as the Church had at that time; *And God hath set some in the Church*---&c. Now the Church at that time had no Christian Magistrate, nor for above 200 years after. So by *Governments* cannot be meaned the Christian Magistrate but the Ruling Elder, who is often spoken of in other places.

Our *Fourth* Argument to prove this point is, That the Church did enjoy full power of Government within her self, and accordingly did exercise it, near 300 years, before any Magistrate was a Christian, and so the Church hath this power within her self yet. For the first part of the Argument, it is evident if we consider: *First*, That which is not controverted, to wit, that in the space of 300 years after Christ, there was not a Magistrate a Christian: If we consider, *Secondly*, That all this time the Church had full power of Church Government within her self; and therefore *Paul* sayes to *Timothy* 1 *Tim*: 4. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands*

hands of the Presbytery. So they had power of Ordination, Power also to dispence Censures, as Excommunication. 1 *Cor:* 5. 4, 5----*When ye are gathered together---To deliver such a one unto* Satan, *for the destruction of the Flesh*, &c. And they had power to relax from Excommunication: So 2 *Cor:* 2, 6. Where *Paul* commands to relax the Excommunicate man from that Sentence, *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.* v. 7. *So that contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him*, &c. *Fourthly*, They had Synods meeting together, making binding Canons to guide the Church. *Act:* 15. The Synod of Apostles, Elders, and Brethren meet together, determine a controversie, and Censure those who had troubled the Church. Thus the first part of the Argument is made out, to wit, That the Church did enjoy full power of Discipline within her self long before any Magistrate became Christian, And therefore it followes that this power is yet in the Churches hand, and not in the Magistrates. And that because if the Church at that time had right to dispence this power, as undoubtedly she had, then they must make it appear how Christ took this right from her and transferred it to the Civil Magistrate, which they cannot do.

Our *fifth* Argument is to obviate that which they say, That Ministers are but the Magistrates deputes: From which we argue thus: If Church Officers in inflicting Censures be the Magistrates deputs, then whatever the Church Judicatory does the Magistrate may do it also, for none can delegate more right to another

ther than what he hath himself: And so by this it should follow that the Magistrate might ordain Misters himself by imposition of hands, he might Excommunicate; And if he may do this, by consequence he might also Preach, Administrate the Sacraments &c. For what right can be pretended to the one, which may not be extended to the other; and so there should be no need of Pastors and Teachers, but the Magistrate might do all.

Our last Argument is taken from the distinction which the Scripture holdeth out betwixt Ecclesiastick and Civil power, Scripture condemneth Church-mens usurping the Civil power, and Statesmens usurping the Church power: Church men are forbidden to judge or meddle with Civil things by Christ himself *Luk*: 12. 13, 14. 22. 25. And so the Civil Magistrate may not meddle with Church power either: There are two Kings we read of to be heavily punished for their Transgression in this kind; *Saul*, for offering a Burnt-offering 1 *Sam*: 13. 13. And *Uzziah*, for burning Incense 2 *Chorn*. 26. 19. He would go in and burn Incense; And therefore the Lord smites him with leprosie. And surely Reason would say, if it be a sin for Church Officers to Exercise the Civil Government, then it is a sin for the Civil Magistrate to take to himself the only supream power of Church Government, and ingross it wholy to himself.

III. We come to the *Third* thing we promised to speak to, And that was the answering of the Opposites Arguments. The first Argument they bring

against this Truth is, That Godly Magistrates under the Old Testament had the power of Church Government: And therefore so should Christian Magistrates have it under the New. Wee Answer, That their Argument proves nothing, except they also prove, that what power of Church Government Magistrates had then, they had it as Magistrates: For we grant indeed what did belong to Magistrates as Magistrates under the Old Testament, does belong to Magistrates under the New; But it may not be granted, that that which belonged to Magistrates then under other respects, doth belong to Magistrates yet. For clearing of this, It is to be observed that there were many Magistrates extraordinary men under the Old Testament. So *Moses* gives out Laws and Ordinances for ordering the Church; But we find in *Deut:* 18. 15. *Moses* was a great Prophet and a Type of Christ. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.* So *David* appointed the office of the *Levites* that divided their courses; But *David* was a Prophet 2. *Chron:* 8, 14. *And he appointed according to the order of* David *his father, the courses of the Priests to their service*: Thus in another place it is shown how *David* did this at the direction of other Prophets, 2 *Chron.* 29. 25. *And he set the Levites in the House of the Lord with Cymbals, with Psalters, and with Harps, according to the Commandment of* David, *and of* Gad *the Kings seer, and* Nathan *the Prophet*: For so was the Commandment of the Lord by his Prophets

phets. And so from these and such like practices they can no more infer the Power of the Magistrate now in Church matters, than we may infer the Power of Church-men in Civil-matters from the example of Church-men under the Old-Testament: For Church-men did meddle with Civil-Matters in extraordinary Cases: As *Eli* the Priest, He governed the State: And *Samuel*, in cutting *Agag* in pieces. *Elisha* in Anointing *Jehu* to be King: And *Jehoiada* the Priest, in causing kill *Athaliah* the Usurper. and making *Joash* King. All which we grant were extraordinary Acts, and so cannot be an ordinary rule for Church-men to have such Power in Civil things now: And so must they grant concerning these extraordinary practices of Civil Judges, in medling sometimes with Church matters.

The *Second* Argument they use is this, If so be that Magistrates were set over Church Officers to receive Appeals from them, it would make them afraid to go beyond their Duty: But if they have none above them, there is danger of their Ambition and abusing of Discipline. To which we answer, *First*, Ministers are Men indeed, and as other men, are ready to abuse their Power; But if the danger of abusing Power be a good Argument to take Power from them, then there should be no Power in the Hands of any: For what kind of Men are there to be found, who are not in danger to abuse their Power, and so all must be left in Confusion. We give a *second* answer, That the same Argument may be used against the abuse of Preaching the Word,

and administrating the Sacraments, For the danger is as great; and yet the *Erastians* (the most part of them at least) will not say that the Magistrate, for preventing of this abuse, may step into the Pulpit himself and Preach better, and Administer the Sacraments better, There is another way to curb that abuse; and so is it in the matter of Governing the Church, there is danger indeed of abusing that Power: but we say in like manner, that for that the Magistrate may not sit down and take the Power of Church Government himself: There are other means left to prevent this danger: Which shall be our *Third* Answer, Wherein we shall show some of these means appointed by God for preventing the abuse of Power in the hands of the Church-Officers: *First*, There are some Remedies in the Church Power it self, to wit, The Subordination of Judicatories: So that although a Congregational Eldership should wrest Justice; yet there are above them *Presbyteries*, and above them *Synods*, and above them *General Assemblies*. Now it may be conceived that an Act of Injustice will hardly get through all those, before it be branded with some deserved mark: But *Secondly*, Though all Church Officers should connive one at another, and so the Faults of Ministers go through unpunished, yet there is some remedy left even in the Civil Power: For although, for the reasons foresaid, he may not take upon him the Power of the Church Judicatory under pretence of Righting their Abuses, no more than he may take upon him to Preach, for preventing their abuse of Preaching:

Preaching: Yet he may do several things. 1. If Church Officers commit a civil Crime, he may curb them by his own Authority. 2. If Church Judicatories meddle to judge in Civil things which concern a mans Life or Estate, the Magistrate may make null what they conclude and punish them for abuse of Power; for therein they medled with what belonged not unto them. 3. Grant the matter be meerly Ecclesiastick wherein they abuse their Power, yet the Magistrate may do somewhat here also: He may command them to resume the matter, he may compear in person and reason the matter, and bid them see to it in the Name of the Lord, and stir them up to judge it better, and he may go from one Judicatory to another till he get this done: As for example, If it be a censure wrongously inflicted; But yet it is still the Church Judicatory that must ranverse their own Censure.

The *Third* Argument they use against this Truth is, If the Power were put in the Hands of the Civil Magistrate, it would be a mean to decide all the whole Controversies about Church Government, which are managed with so much Animosity on all hands: *Prelates* plead that They should have the Power of it: *Independents* That particular Congregations: *Presbyterians*, That Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, General Assemblies, should have the Power of it, the former being Subordinate to the latter, Sessions to Presbyteries, *&c.* Hence ariseth all our Debates: Now were not this good to take it from all, and give it to the Magistrate. We answer. It is a

way to end the Difference, such as *Solomon* did to the two Women striving about the living Child, *It shall be none of yours*, A way that relished not with the kindly Mother of the Child, 1 *Kings* 3. 25. *Secondly*, We answer, This Argument may take with natural Hearts who would buy Peace at any rate; but not with those who are taught of God *To buy the Truth and not to sell it*; For it holdeth out a way to end Controversies, which is not God's: His way is to establish what is right, and to quite what is wrong: But this way tends to suppress both right and wrong, such Peace-makers will not be Blessed.

Thirdly, The *Presbyterians* may borrow this Argument against *Prelates*, *Independents*, *Erastians*, and have better right to it, and so it will run thus: If Church Government were put in the hands of the *Presbytery*, It would establish and settle all Differences in the matter of Church Government betwixt *Prelates*, *Independents*, and *Erastians*: Now if this Arment be good when they use it for them, it must be also good when it is used for us: But I doubt if they will admit of such like reasoning, and so neither can we.

There is a *Fourth* Argument they use, say they, *Jeremiah* appealed to the Civil Magistrate *Jerem*: 26. and so *Paul Act*: 25. He appeals to *Cæsar*. We answer, let that place of *Jeremiah* cap. 26. be read, and nothing will be found to prove that *Jeremiah* makes any appeal to the Civil Judicatories: But *Secondly*, Though he had appealed, yet it does not prove that it is Lawful to appeal to the Magistrate in a Church business; for the Sentence which the Priests had

past

past on *Jeremiah* was Civil, *Thou shalt surely die*, v 8. Now it was the Princes Duty to see to it, That Innocent *Jeremiah* should not be put to Death, especially by those who had no Power to inflict such a punishment. As for that instance *Acts* 25. 10, 11. about *Paul*'s appealing to *Cæsar*, it makes nothing to these purposes; He appeals only from *Festus*, an Inferior Civil Magistrate to the Superior; And this we are not against. But *Secondly*; Though *Paul* had appealed from a Church Judicatory, yet this makes nothing to confirm their Doctrine: For the cause here whereabout *Paul* was to be judged, was a Civil cause, to wit, Treason against *Cæsar*, And a thing worthy of Death. Now we do Teach, that a Churchman may appeal to a Civil Magistrate, when he is questioned about his Life. and for a Civil crime; But hence it followeth not, That we may appeal from a Church Judicatory, when the cause is Ecclesiastick and no way es civil.

Their last Objection is taken from 1 *King.* 2. 27. Whereof they make much, The words are, *So* Solomon *thrust out* Abiathar *from being Priest unto the Lord*: From which they argue thus: Here is a civil Magistrate inflicting a Church Censure. to wit, Deposition of a Church-man, to wit, of *Abiathar* the Priest, Solomon *thrust out* Abiathar *from being Priest unto the Lord*: Therefore, Christian Magistrates have Power to Dispence Church Censures: Yet we answer, *Solomon* did nothing here but what we yeild to any Magistrate, for a civil Magistrate may inflict a civil Punishment on any person whatsomever for a ci-

vil Crime; and so was the present case: *Abiathar*'s Fault was Treason, in assisting *Adonijah* to the Crown against *Solomon*, appointed by God to it. *Secondly*, The Censure inflicted by *Solomon* was not a Church Censure, but civil, to wit, Banishment to *Anathoth*, as appears from *verse* 26. And therefore what is mentioned in *verse* 27. *He thrust out* Abiathar *from being Priest unto the Lord*, Is not the Censure directly intended by *Solomon*, but that which followed upon his Banishment from *Jerusalem*, *ipso facto*; because the Office of the Priests could not be exercised but at *Jerusalem*.

IV. In the last place it follows. That we give a word of use from all we have said. The *First* use, If so be that Jesus Christ hath appointed a Government in his House, as is proven, to be exercised by his own Officers, Then know that those Magistrates that would ingross this Power to themselves, so as to have his Courts and Censures depending on them, or rather taken away, and others put in their place, do highly incroach on the Regal Power of our King Jesus Christ. And this seemeth to be the great sin of the Times, Atheists, prophane Men, plead for it; as looking for more forbearance to their Lusts from civil Powers, than from Christs own Courts. Civil Powers plead for it; They are not content that Christ let Them reign, and that they let Christ reign besides them; But they must have him thrust out of his Throne, and made to plead at their bar; And so no wonder Christ overturn Kingdoms and Governments: It was the Parliament of *England*'s fault,

They

They feared lest Christs Courts should have wronged their Priviledges; Hence they would not allow him his Priviledges: They set up indeed a Government in Christ's Houle, but it was a Lame one; They durst not give Christs Courts their full Power, but so as to be their Deputes: And therefore they have dashed themselves against that corner-stone Christ Jesus, until they are struck in pieces, Their Fear is come upon them. What they feared from Christs Courts, they have met with at the Hands of their own Servants: Our Kings have still been afraid of this, and Malignants also going under the Name of Royalists; They thought they could not get Their Throne secure if so be Christ got leave to reign besides them; And this among many others hath made their Throne shake. O that Kings would be wise and kiss the Son, It would be their Wisdom to be faithful in what is committed unto them; But for the Government of his House it is not in their Charter, and so a thing that will not thrive in their hands, their prudential Laws and Rules will do no good.

Secondly, Yee would ground your self in this Truth; It may cost you much, and though it should stand you never so much, it is worth the avowing. Christ himself suffered on this account (as we have already shown) and others of his servants have thought it their Glory to be called unto suffering for it. *Who am I* (saith Master *Welsh*) "That he hath "not only called me to be a Preacher of glad things, "but also to be a sufferer for his cause and King-

dom;

" dom; To wittness that good confession, That " Jesus Christ is the King of Saints, and that his " Church is a most free Kingdom; Yea as free as any " Kingdom under Heaven: That she is free in her " Government from all other Jurisdiction on Earth " except only Christs: We are waiting (saith " he) with joyfulness to leave the last Testimony " of our blood for the confirmation of this Truth; " If it would please our God to be so favourable, as to " honour us with that dignity. Thus He. And who knowes how soon he may honour some of us with that dignity: A dignity indeed to suffer for the Royal Crown and Diadem of Our Lord Jesus.

SECT.

SECT: IV.

A BRIEF REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF Independency.

Head I.

The Power of Church Government is in the Church Officers, and not in the Body of Church-Members.

THE dayes by-past we spake against the Doctrine of *Erastianism*, And shew you, that however it had many fair pretences, yet it is to be reckoned among those Doctrines which are

are not of God. We are now, with the Lords assistance, to speak against the Doctrine of *Independency*, Ye Remember when we entered on these controversies about Church Government, We shew you there were *Four* points of Truth which we should Labour to make good: The *first* was, That Jesus Christ the head of his Church, had appointed in his word a way for the Governing and Ruling of his Church, and that he had not left it to the power of the Civil Magistrate, King or Parliament, To establish what way of Government they please. The *second* point was, That this Government of the Church which Christ established in his word was not in the hands of the Civil Magistrate, to be Executed by him. Thir two points we have made good in our former Disputs against *Erastianism*. The *third* point of Truth is this; That Jesus Christ the head of the Church hath not committed the power of Governing his Church unto the Body of Believers, To the community of Church Members: but hath established it in the hands of his own officers, Ministers, and Elders. The *Fourth* point of Truth which we promised to prove was this, That Jesus Christ the head of the Church hath not given particular Elderships and Church Sessions, the Supream power of Church Government in their hands, so as that there should be none above them to call them to an account; But that they are subject in the Lord to Superior Church Judicatories; such as Presbytries, Synods, and General Assemblies. These *two* last points we are to make out in Refuting this Doctrine of *Independency*.

This

This Error of *Independency* above all other we may call a fountain Error: It is the Sluce, whereby an entrance is made to all other Errors of what sort soever. This is the Error whereby the most part of those that hath fallen from the way of Truth these years by past, have been first hooked; They first turned *Independents*, yet rested not long there, but proceeded from evil to worse. Our scope shall be in this as in the former points to show, That however it hath many fair pretences, yet when it is brought to the Tryal, it will be found *not to be of God*.

There are *two* main heads of this Error of *Independency* oppolit to the *two* last points of Truth, which we promised to make out. The *first* is, That whereby they affirm, That Jesus Christ has given the power of Governing the Church unto all those that are Members of the Church, Although they be not Ministers or Elders: To the community of believers as they call it. The *second* Head of their Error is this, They do affirm that Jesus Christ hath intrusted particular Congregations, Elderships, or Church Sessions with the highest power of Church Government on earth; so that there is no Judicatory above them to call them to an account. As for the *first* Head of their Error which we are to speak against at this time. Therein they have different Opinions among themselves; some affirming that the power of Governing the Church is given to the Body of Church Members, the community of Believers, without the Minister and Elders; yea a power over them to ordain them, Censure, depose

them, and inflict all other Church Censures: Others give them this power conjunctly with the Church Officers, Ministers, and Elders. *Secondly*, Some give only the power and Authority to Govern, to the Church Members; But for the Exercise of that power, they allow it to the Elders: Yet so as to the Peoples deputs, to whom they must give an account: Others give the People not only the power and Authority, but also the Exercise of this Government; So that the People may sit down in Church Judicatories themselves, enact Church Canons, inflict Church Censures &c. *Thirdly*, Some give them the Exercise of this power only in some things; as the Excercise of the power of Jurisdiction, to make Church Canons, and inflict Church Censures; But nor to Preach. Others give them a full Exercise of Authority to do all.

We in opposition to all these, lay down this conclusion, which we shall Labour to make good from the word of God, and solid Reason; to wit, That Jesus Christ hath not given to the Body of Church Members, or to private Christians either the power or Exercise of Church Government, neither in whole nor in part, but hath intrusted it wholly to his own Officers, Ministers, and Elders. I prosecuting this point we shall follow forth the former Method. *First*, We shall clear the State of the Question. *Secondly*, Bring Arguments for the Truth. And *Thirdly*, We shall propone and answer their Arguments brought against the Truth. And *Fourthly*, We shall shall apply the whole to some use.

I.

I. For clearing the ſtate of the Queſtion, That it may be known what we do grant to private Chriſtians, and what we deny, ſeveral diſtinctions would be given. *Firſt*, There is difference betwixt Church power or Authority, and Chriſtian priviledges: We do grant ſeveral Chriſtian priviledges to private Chriſtians, but theſe do not infer any Church power, or Authority of Governing the Church. As for Example, We do grant to the People a Power of Electing their own Officers, Miniſters, or Elders, we grant to them a power to *try the Spirits whether they be of God*: i. e. They are not to believe blindly what Miniſters ſay, but have a power to Try what they ſay in Relation to their practice, To paſs a Judgment of diſcretion upon it, whether it be according to the word or not. We grant theſe priviledges to the People but none of them doth infer any Church power, which we clear in both. *Firſt*, The Peoples power in Electing their Miniſter, doth not infer any power of Church Government in them, and that becauſe it is not the Peoples Election or their choiſe that makes the Miniſter to be a Miniſter, or gives him Authority to Exerciſe the Miniſterial calling; but it is the Act of Ordination, by impoſition of the hands of thoſe who are Church Officers, that makes the man the Miniſter, and gives him Authority. We ſhall find this, *Acts* 6. 3. where the Peoples Election and Ordination by Church Officers is clearly diſtinguiſhed. *Wherefore Brethren*, (ſay the Apoſtles) *look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt, and wiſdom* (there

(there is the Peoples Election) *whom we may appoint over this busines*, There is the Church Officers part: Though the People look them out and choise them, that gives them not the power of their calling untill the Church Officers appoint and ordain them. *Secondly, The power of trying the Spirits* doth not infer any such power or Authority of Government in the People, otherwise it should follow that the People of *Berea*, who did try *Pauls* Doctrine, *Act.* 17. 11. And compared it with the word *whether those things were so*, had Authority over *Paul*, which none will affirm.

A *Second* distinction to clear the state of the Question is this, There is a great difference betwixt those *to whom* the Authority of Governing the Church is given, and those *for whom*, or for whose good it is given: although we deny that the power of Governing the Church is given to private Believers, yet we grant it is given *for them*. So all Ordinances are given for the good of Believers: As it is *Ephes.* 4. 11. *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangilists, and some Pastors, and Teachers*: For *the perfecting of the Saints*, &c. and in this respect 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22. all is said to be theirs--- *For all things are yours, whether* Paul *or* Apollos *or* Cephas, *or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours*, i. e. given for their good: But hence it will not follow, that because Church Discipline is given *for them*, that therefore they have the power of it; for in this respect *Paul* is given to every particular believing Woman, and yet

yet it does not follow that Women have *Pauls* Authority. And so the Body of the particular Church hath not this power in their hands although the power be given for their good.

A *Third* thing for understanding the State of the Question; We do willingly grant to private Christians power to admonish, exhort in the Lord, out of Charity: and this they may extend even to Ministers, *say to* Archippus *take heed to thy Ministry.* But this Liberty to admonish by way of Charity, doth not import any Church power in them over those whom they rebuke, no more than *Pauls* rebuking of *Peter Gal:* 2. 14. doth infer a power in *Paul* above *Peter.* So ye see what we do grant to private Christians; and what we deny: The sum whereof is this. That Jesus Christ hath not given them any power of Church Government, or the Exercise of it, either in whole or in part, but has intrusted it wholly to his own Officers, Ministers, and Elders. This for clearing the state of the Question.

II. We come now to Arguments for clearing the Truth, And the *First* is this, That Jesus Christ hath given no warrand to private Christians for Governing his House, or for the Exercise of this Government; and therefore they have no right to it. The consequence must be clear: For none has right to play the part of a Governour in Christs Church, except those who have a warrand in his word for it. Now that private Christians have no warrand in his word for Governing the Church, either expresly, or by good consequence, either by precept or promise.

or any thing else, it is clear from this that in several places of the Word this power is denyed unto them: So *Rom:* 10. they must not exercise the Power of Preaching for *how shall they Preach except they be sent*, v. 15. Now the whole communi y of Believers cannot be sent, besides they have no ability to discharge this Office, there is but one of a Thousand that can convince gainsayers: Is *apt to teach*, that is; able to cut and divide the word aright; and so they have no power to Preach. And *Secondly*, From this it will follow that they have no power to Administrate the Sacraments, for Christ Jesus hath joyned both these powers in one Commission, He gives no power to any to Aminister the Sacraments, but those to whom he gives power also to Preach *Matth* 28, 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations Baptizing them-* &c. Power of Preaching, and Administrating the Sacraments go together. And so seeing the one power is denyed to them, the other must be denyed also. *Thirdly*, They have no power to ordain Ministers, or to execute any other act of Church Jurisdiction, for they have no ability to try Ministers gifts, there is no precept commanding them to do it, there is no practice in the New Testament proving that ever they did it, as shall be more fully cleared in answering the Arguments they bring for it; And so they have no right to Govern the Church.

The *Second* Argument for the Truth is this, That this Doctrine of theirs, whereby they give the power of Governing the Church to private Christians, doth overturn the order established by Jesus Christ

in his House; And therefore they have no right to it: The consequence none may doubt of; For nothing appointed by God doth evert the order established by himself. Now that this Doctrine of theirs, whereby they put the power of Governing the Church in the hands of the People, doth evert the order appointed by Christ is clear; Because his order is, That some be watchmen, some watched over, some Rulers, some to submit: some Governours, some to be Governed: some Sheepherds, some the flock: But if so be that all the Members of the Church had the power of Governing in their hand, then all should be overseers, watchmen, Rulers, Governours; and none more than another, If so be that power to Govern should flow from this, That they are Church Members; For all are so alike.

The *Third* Argument we bring for the Truth is this, That to whomsoever Christ Jesus hath given warrand for Governing the Church, to those he gives promises of suitable abilities for discharging of that great Trust; But so it is, that Jesus Christ hath not gifted, neither promise to gift every Christian, nor yet requireth He answerable gifts for Government from them: And therefore he hath given them no warrand for Governing the Church. For the first part of the Argument, that those to whom he gives the power of Church Government he doth also promise them sufficient abilities for their Trust, is clear, For how could it stand with the wisdom of God to commit the great affairs of his House those whom he hath not qualified to that purpo

Besides no instance can be given that ever he trusted any with those things, but he promised them furniture, and in some measure enabled them accordingly: So when he sendeth forth *Moses*, *Jeremiah*, *Isay*, &c. he giveth them furniture; and when he sendeth out the Apostles he furnishes them for that End; So John 20. 21, *Then said Jesus to them again peace be unto you as my Father sent me, even so send I you.* There is the commission given them: and upon the back of this in v. 22. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them*; &c. There is the Furniture: And so does he to Ministers whom he entrusts with this power, He promises them Furniture, *Matth*; 28, 20----*and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.* There a promise made to the Apostles. and in them to the Ministers, as appears from these following words *even unto the end of the World.* And so these promises could not be fully verified in the Apostles, who were to die within a little, but in Ministers their successors, to the Worlds end. Now it is very evident he hath neither made such promises to every particular believer, for Governing the Church; neither doth he perform them unto them What? Is every believer furnished with that measure of knowledge, prudence, and wisdom, that is required for the right managing of the affaires of Church Government? Yea, God doth not require it of them: And so certainly it stands not with his wisdom to have committed the power of Church Government to all and every one of believers. This for our *third* Argument.

Our *Fourth* Argument for the Truth is, If so be that the power of Governing the Church belongeth to Church Members, Then it belongeth to them either as they are gifted for it, and chosen out for that purpose: And if so, then we have our intent; For then all are not Church Governours, but only those who are gifted and chosen, And so, Church Officers: Or it belongs to them as believers, or Church Members, and if so, then it Belongs to all, for every one is a Church Member as well as another, and every one that hath Faith, is a believer as well as another, and whatever priviledge floweth from Faith, belongs to every believer, the meanest as well as the greatest. So if the right of Church Government be grounded on Faith and Grace, then every believer, and none but believers, should have the right of it, from whence shall follow many absurdities; as that Children as well as Parents, the simple as well as the wise; Women as well as Men, may Preach, Administrate the Sacraments, lay on hands in Ordaining the Ministers, sit in Sessions, inflict Censures, Excommunicate, and what not. *Secondly*, Then none but believers should have right to Church Government. So none hath power to Baptise, Censure &c. But they that have Grace. And upon this People should have Reason to doubt whether they be rightly Baptised or not, because they know not if the Minister who Baptised them had Grace or not; and if he wanted Grace, he had no power of Church Government by this Doctrine; And so no power to Baptise.

We bring a *Fifth* Argument for the Truth, and it is this, private Christians are in no place of Scripture acknowledged to be Church Governours, There are no names nor titles given to them, importing this power to be in them, as is given to Church Officers 1 *Tim*: 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour* And 1 *Corinth.* 12. 28. *And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly Prophets, thirdly Teachers,* &c. But no title of that kind is given to private Christians; Yea they are set down plainly under names in opposition to Governours: As the flock to Overseers. *Acts* 20. 28. *Take heed therefore unto your selves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* &c. Yea and are commanded to honour, obey, submit to their Governours set over them, and distinct from them, *Hebr*: 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you and submit your selves.* &c. Now it is strange to imagine, That Christ should have intrusted them with highest power of Government; And yet in all the stiles he gives them, there is nothing imported of that power, but much of their Subjection; Surely he hath not done so with Officers, as we have shown; And let any discover the Reason of the difference.

A *Sixth* Argument for the Truth is this, If so be that the power of Governing the Church be given but only to some, then it does not belong to all; but, so it is that the power of Governing the Church is only given to some; therefore, not to all Church Members. The first part of the Argument cannot be

be denyed ; For the second, That it is only given to some, see those proofs that limit this power only to some as *Ephes*: 4. 11. *And he gave some Apostles and some Prophets,* &c. *Some* and therefore not all 1 *Cor*: 12. 28. (which we cited before) *and God hath set some in the Church , first Apostles, secondly, Prophets, thirdly teachers,* There are but some that he hath set for Governing his house and therefore not all and *Heb*: 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves* &c. *Tim*: 5. 17. (as is likewise before cited) There are some then that rule, to whom the rest ought to submit; And so all are not Rulers.

There is a *Seventh* Argument for clearing the Truth. And it is this, That power which Jesus Christ hath not set down rules and limits to order it by in his word, is not of God ; but he hath set down no Rules how to direct the managing of Church Power in the hand of Church-Members ; therefore it is not of God. The first part of our Argument, That whatever Power is appointed of God, he hath set down Rules how to order it, is very clear ; As we may prove by the Enumeration of lawful Powers: He hath set down Rules how to Regulate the Power of a King, that he play not the Tyrant ; He hath set down Rules to Regulate the Power of Masters, Parents by: So the Power in the Hand of the Church Officers is regulated, that they *Rule with Diligence, Rom.* 12. 8. And so through the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*: But so it is that he hath set down no Rules to order Church Government by in the Hands

particular Believers: For in no place of the word will such Rules be found, *Ye that are the flock govern the Pastors and feed them, watch over the People of God, lay hands suddenly on no man.* I say there are no such directions given to private Christians; and therefore this pretended Power is *not of God.*

Our last Argument for the Truth is, If so be the Power of governing the Church doth belong to every Church-member; then every Church-member is bound in Conscience to attend all Church Judicatories, to wait on the deciding of all Ecclesiastical questions: But what inevitable confusion would follow on this? How long time would it take to inform People about the Circumstances of things? How tedious would it be to hear every mans judgment to the point? And what distractions would it be to Peoples Callings? This certainly would bring great confusion; And so such a Power as this cannot be from God, who is the God of Order. These are now the Arguments for the Truth.

III. In the next place we shall answer their Arguments brought against the Truth. The *first* they use is grounded on *Colos.* 4. 17. A command There is given to the Body of Believers in reference to the Minister, Say *to Archippus, Take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord.* From this they infer, That People have Power to Censure their Minister; And so have Church Authority. We answer, They make much of this Argument, and yet it is little worth: For they build their Power to Censure upon this that they have Power (to *Say*) A poor reason.

reason. So *Matth.* 18. 17. *Say* to the Church, or *tell the Church:* It is the same word that is here used; But to infer from this that one man had Authority over the Church, were very ridiculous. Surely if he had commanded a judicial act of Authority, he would have said *Command and Charge Archippus* with *all Authority*, as in the like case he speaks to *Timothy*; But as we shew in the state of the question, private Christians have Power to exhort and admonish one another, yea their Pastors; But this doth not import any Power of Church-Government over others, else women who are not permitted to speak in the Church, should have Power of Church-Government, to make Church Canons, Censure and Ordain their Ministers; For they are bound to exhort and admonish as occasion offers.

Obj. 2. A *second* Argument they bring from *Act.* 11. 1. When *Peter* comes up to *Jerusalem, verse* 3. the people Challenge him saying, *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them*, and verse 4. *He begins to clear himself to them, and rehearsed the matter from the beginning*, &c. And from this they reason thus: That the Church hath Power to call *Peter* to an account; And therefore they have Power to Censure for Scandals. Its answered *first*. Besides the People, there were Apostles and Brethren There *verse* 1. *Secondly*, We answer, It doth not follow because *Peter* purgeth himself of a Scandal unjustly laid upon him, That therefore they had Power to Censure him; For every Christian is bound to clear himself to another Christian of that which he is stumbled with

within his carriage; yet one private Christian hath not Church Power over another to Censure: So *Peter* was bound to clear himself before any one of them, and if he had done wrong, to take with it, but that That one could not be a Church Judicatory having Power to inflict Censure on *Peter*, our Opposits themselves will grant.

Obj. 3. A *Third* Argument they bring against the Truth, is from *Revel.* 2. 14. *I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of* Balaam. The Spirit of God here is writing to the Church of *Pergamus*, And after he hath commended them for their Doctrine, he reproves them for not exercising Discipline against these Hereticks, to wit, *Balaam*, *Jesabel* and the *Nicolaitans*. Now from this they argue, The whole Church is reproved here for not executing Discipline against these Hereticks; and therefore they had power to do it, Otherwise they would not have been reproved for the neglect of it: But that all were reproved, they prove from *vers.* 13. and its connection with the 14. say they, these who are commended in the 13. are rebuked in the 14 *verse*, *I know thy Works, and where thou dwellest, even where* Sathan's *seat is*, &c. But so it is, that not only the Ministers and Elders, but all the People, dwelt where Sathan's Seat was: Therefore they all are reproved. *Answer*, It followeth well that they are all reproved for one fault: But not that they were accessory to it after one and the same way. It was the Rulers part judicially to cast out these vile Hereticks: It was the Peoples part to have stirred up the

the Rulers to it: Now becauſe theſe were neglected on both hands, both have their own guilt; and ſo both reproved for their reſpective guilt: The People are reproved for not Mourning to God for the tollerating ſuch like abominations; and their not ſtirring up the Rulers to take courſe with them: But it will not follow that they were reproved for not ſitting down in the Judicatory and inflicting Cenſures themſelves; That was the Rulers fault: And therefore we deny that they are all rebuked for their acceſſion to that guilt in the ſame way; And we clear it thus, Doubtleſs the Teachers did not teach againſt theſe vile Hereticks; Now there were Women there, and yet ſurely they are not rebuked for not Preaching againſt them, for They ought to be ſilent in the Church: So their fault, as of all other Church Members, was of another kind, to wit, Their not Mourning nor ſtirring up the Officers: And ſo it followes that it was their Duty to Mourn, ſtir others up to their Duty, which we grant. But not to exerciſe the Power themſelves, for that is not the thing they are reproved for.

*Obj.*4. The *Fourth* Objection is grounded on *Mat.* 18, 17, *If he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a Publican.* Whence (ſay they) the power of Church Cenſure is in the hand of the Church; but ſo it is Church Officers are never called the Church; Neither can they be ſo called without the Body of the People: Therefore the power of the Church Cenſures is in the hand of the Body of the People. Wee Anſwer, This Argument

ment will make more against them than us, and that because they grant that neither Women nor Children have hand in Church Government, but only professing Men: Now they shall get no place in Scripture wherein the name of the Church is given to the Body of the Men Assembled without Women and Children. *Secondly*, We grant that the name of the Church is very sparingly given to Officers without the People: Yet we say. 1. It is given them in some places; As for Example *Acts* 18. 22. It is said of *Paul*. *When he had landed at* Cæsarea, *and gone up, and saluted the Church*, &c. Now by the Church here certainly cannot be meaned the body of professors which did amount to many thousands of People as shall appear from *Acts* 21. 20. In its own time: So by the Church must be meaned the Chief men and Rulers of the Church. For *Paul* having so short time to stay, he seeing them but at the by, could not have saluted every one, man by man; and therefore certainly, it must be the prime men of the Church. But *Secondly*, The name of the Church is very usualy given to Rulers and Judges whether Ecclesiastick or Civil, without the People in the Old Testament, So *Psalm* 82, 1. *God standeth in the congation of the mighty:* The same word rendred there *Congregation* is rendred the *Church* elsewhere; And by the *Congregation* there, is meaned the *Judges*, and not the People: so we find it taken for the Rulers by comparing *Exod*: 20. 18. 19. with *Deut*: 5. 23. 2 *Chron*: 1. 3. Where *Solomon* takes up the whole *Congregation* with him: And yet that *Congregation* is ex-

exponed v. 2. to have been *Chief-men and Rulers*, so that usualy in the Old Testament, the word (Church) is taken from Rulers. And *Thirdly*, it must be so taken in this place also, for in the verse following he telleth what a Church he meaned by, v, 18, *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever yee shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven*: &c. Speaking to the Apostles: So it must be the Church of Rulers who are so called, because they represent the Church, doing her business wherein she is concerned.

Objection *Fifth*, This were (say they) to establish a yoke of Tyranny over Church Members, if power be put in the hands of Officers to make Acts binding to them, and they to have no hand in making these Acts themselves. We Answer it is no yoke of Tyranny to instruct Officers with power to be *over the People in the Lord*: To Rule them according to his will; to make use of their power not for destruction but for edification. And this is all we do teach. Its true, Church Officers may abuse their power, but there is no power were it never so good but coming in mans hand may be wrongly used. But *secondly*, There is as great danger of Tyranny in the *Independent* way, and more also, than in this; For if the major part of the Congregation should enact what is wrong, and press it on the fewer and better part; would not that be Tyranny? And surely there is as great liklyhood of this, as of what they say, that the Eldership may press unjust Acts upon the Congregation: And as it is as likly, so it is more remeedless, for though a Congregation or any in

it

it be wronged by the Elerdership, they have a Superior Judicatory to complean to, according to our Doctrine: But if the lesser part of the Congregation be wronged and Tyrannized over by the greater, according to their Doctrine, there is no power under Heaven to right the wrong, to call the oppressing party to an account: So of all Governments under Heaven *Independency* is the most Tyrannical.

*Obj.*VI. The *Sixth* Objection they bring against the Truth is from *Matth:*16.19. Where Christ sayes *I will give unto thee the keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever shall be bound on earth*--&c. It is agreed on by both sides, that by the Keys there is meaned, the power of Governing the Church. Now from this place they would infer that the Keys are given to the Body of the People: We shall propone and Answer *Three* of their Objections, whereby they labour to prove this consequence: The *first* is this, The Keys are given to the Church built on the Rock whereof Christ spake in the preceeding 18. v. But sure it is, all that are believers are built on this Rock; Therefore the power of the Keys are given unto them. We Answer, What they say that the power of the Keyes are given to the Church built on the Rock, Is said without a ground; For he doth not say *Unto this Church built on a rock do I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; But I give it *to thee Peter*: Sure none needs to learn our Lord to speak; and this change of Person is not without a Reason, in the preceeding *verse*, he says---*upon this rock I will build my Church*

Church. Now if Christ had meaned to have established the Government in the hands of the body of the Church, he might have as easily said *unto this Church will I give the Keys* &c. But he says not so, but changes the person, *unto thee* to wit, *Peter will I give the keyes* Besides this also every believing woman is a part of this Church built on the rock; And yet according to their own grant, the power of the Keys is not given unto them. The *Second* Argument they bring from this place is this: The power of the Keys is given to those whom *Peter* did represent: But, *Peter* did represent all believers, the body of the Church: therefore, the power of the Keys is given unto them. For answer to this, we deny what is affirmed, that *Peter* in this place doth represent all believers, he doth but represent the rest of the Apostles, and those who were to succeed to the Apostes in Preaching the word and Administrating the Sacraments: And this we shall make good from other places of Scripture wherein the grant of this power is renewed and confirmed: The first place is *John* 20. 21. *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my father hath sent me, even so send I you,* and v, 23; *Whosoevers sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,* &c. Where it is clear the above mentioned grant is renewed, and renewed to the Apostles. *Secondly,* He did not only represent the Apostles, but all Ministers who succeed to the Apostles in Preaching the word and Administrating the Sacraments; As is plain also from *Matth*: 28. 19, 20. Where ye will find these things clear. 1. That there is a grant of power by Jesus Christ

Christ unto the Apostles. 2. That this grant is made there not only to the Apostles but to these who should succeed to them in Preaching and Baptizing to the end of the World: For it is said----*lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.* And so from this we retort the Argument on themselves, That the power of the Keys is given to these whom *Peter* did represent: But, so it is, *Peter* did represent the Apostles, and Ministers who were to succeed to them in Preaching the word &c. And therefore, the power of the Keys is given unto them. They argue *Thirdly* from this place that the grant of the Keys is of as large extent as *Peters* confession v. 16, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Now this Confession belongs to all believers, and so also must the power of the *Keys*. We Answer, 1. That the grant of the power of the *Keys* doth belong to all who hold out *Peters* Confession, hath no ground but their own Assertion. And 2. We say it is false, For this Confession belongs to all faithful Women and Children as well as men, who yet by our Opposits own concession have not the *Power* of the *Keys*.

Their last Objection is taken from 1 *Cor*: 5. 5. Where the Apostle commands the Church of *Corinth* to Excommunicate the Incestous Person *To deliver such a one unto Sathan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Now, say they, this command is given unto all the Church, because there is no exception, and therefore not to Elders only; As also the command is as large

as

as the reproof in v. 2. *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned*, &c. Now sure it is there were moe reproved than the Church Officers; And therefore the command belongs to others than these. In Answering this Argument, we shall first retort it on themselves, For if so be the Argument hold good it would follow that Women and Children had power of Excommunication; for if the command be to all without exception, then they are not excepted; and if the command be given to all to whom the reproof is given, then it is to them, for doubtless Women and Children mourned no more than the men: And so they should have power to Excommunicate also: Now this were absurd and against themselves; And so the two main pillars whereon they build their Argument, fall to the ground; to wit, That the command is given to all without exception; And that it is of a like latitude with the reproof. But *Secondly*, We Answer to the point, That all who are acquaint with Scripture know that God useth to give commands indefinitly to the whole Church, which he will not have applyed to every one in the Church, but only to those persons to whom, according to their respective callings, interest, or relations, the command doth belong: We shall make this clear from 1 *Cor*: 14. 31. Where *Paul* speaketh generally to the Saints at *Corinth*: *ye may all Prophecy one by one*, &c. The command is given indefinitly to all, and yet sure it is not the Apostles mind that all to whom he writs should do this, but only they who had abilities and a Call to it; and therefore

he sayes in the preceeding 12. chap. 29. *Are all Apostles? are all Prophets? are all Teachers?* &c. So in 1 *Thess.* 5. 13. *And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, &c.* Now if this be a duty lying on all to whom the Epistle is directed, then the Ministers had been to *esteem highly* of themselves for their own works sake; For the Epistle is written to them among the rest; now this were absurd and so it must be intended for the People. So is it here the command is given indefinitly to all, yet the matter is not to be done by all, but only by some, to wit, the Church officers, and this appeareth evidently from 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. He was speaking to them concerning the same case in hand, to wit, the relaxing of the incestous man from Excommunication, and sayes he, *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many.* Now he doth not say *Inflicted of all* (as they would make the words bear) but *inflicted of many*: Yea (as the learned observe) the word (*many*) signifieth, The chief ones; It is the same word that is *Matth.* 12. 41 *--a greater than* Jonas. So *Paul* explaines himself, That it was not all but the chief Ones, to wit, the Rulers, by whom the Censure was to be inflicted. And this now for Answering their Objections.

IV. In the nixt place we shall come, and apply the whole purpose to a threefold Use. And the first is: Seeing this Error, as we have now made evident, *it is not of God*: I would have you suspecting fair pretences that a Doctrine may be coloured over with; There is no Error that hath a fairer pretence than this

This hath: it is the liberty of the Saints, say they, should not they judge others; A fair pretence; And yet it is but the same that *Korah Dathan*, and *Abiram* had, and so we need to stumble the less at it----*Ye take too much upon you* (said they) *seing all the Congregation are Holy every one of them*, &c. *Numb.* 16. 3.

The *Second Use* is to private Christians, that ye would do your duty: And *Secondly*, Content your selves with your duty. And *first* do your duty, whereof many come short. Doubtless many at the hearing of this Doctrine will cast off all care, seeing the care of the Church is laid on the Officers thereof Ministers and Elders; Nay but as we shew in the clearing of the State of the Question, although power of Governing the Church be not in the hands of all believers, yet there is a duty lying on them to admonish and exhort, even their Ministers, *say to* Archippus *take heed to thy Ministry*. Yea it is a duty lying on private Christians, that when your private Admonition doth not the business, ye are bound to delate it to the Church: We see this *Matth.* 16. Where Christs institutes this order v. 16. 1. To tell thy Brother privatly, and if that will not do, bring two or three moe Witnesses with thee: then if that do it not, tell it to the Church: so it is a duty lying on every Church member to admonish and rebuke, even their Ministers and Elders; to stir them up when slack, and when that will not do, to tell it to others. And we would charge you to make more conscience of this duty than usually ye

do. A second part of your duty we told you was to try the spirits in reference to your practice, ye are not bound to take a Doctrine on trust from Ministers, tho Apostles, Nay not from Angels---*Though we, or an Angel from Heaven Preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have Preached unto you, let him be accursed. Galat.* 1. 8. And private Christians come short of this part of their duty also; many seeking no other Reason of their Faith than what Ministers Preach, it is a loose ground; For ye are commanded to *Try the Spirits.* But *Secondly*, As ye would make Conscience of your duty, so ye would content your selves with your duty, ye would look on Church Officers and reverence them; ye are not to say, what is more in them than in our selves, may we not be as fit as they, they may erre as well as we: Grant it be so, yet they are Gods Ordinance, appointed by the God of order, and he who reproacheth them, reproacheth his ordinance, and breaketh down the hedge appointed by God.

The *Third Use* is directed to Church Officers, Those whom the Lord hath instructed with this power, Ye would make use of it for Edification and not for destruction, ye should so carry your selves in your places as not to tempt the People of God to despise your Office. When the Lords People hear of an Elder to be a Tipler, or a Swearer, it is a temptation to them to despise both that Elder and his Office: Many surely in this are stumbling blocks to People, As *Eli*'s Sons made the People abhorr the offering of the Lord. The Truth is, it is no great wonder

wonder that the Government of the Church be losing weight in the minds of many, if it were but for this one Reason, that they who are intrusted with it do not Labour to beautify it; It is looked on by many as a place of respect and not of Office; If a man be Richer than his neighbour, he thinks he is not respected if he be not an Elder; and having goten the name he cares for no more: Now, is that the way either to make People respect thy Person or thy Office. Let me obtest and charge all of you who have taken on this Heavenly Calling, as ye will Answer on your hazard to Jesus Christ the chief sheepherd that ye would study by all means so to walk in it, as to beautify it, and that so much the more, as the Devil is Labouring to disgrace it. And this now for the *First Head* of *Independency*.

Head II.

The higheſt Power of Church Government is not in Church-Seſſions, or Congregational Elderſhips.

WE come now to the *Second Head*, And it is, That, for which mainly they are called *Independents*: The point they affirm is this, That every particular Church Seſſion or Congregational Elderſhip is inſtructed with the higheſt power of Church Government on Earth, ſo that there is no power in the Church above them to call them to an account, when they go wrong, to reſcind any Act once concluded, though it were never ſo unjuſt: They grant that a Synod of Miniſters and Elders may meet to conſult about matters, but withall affirm, that they have no Eccleſiaſticall power to command in the Lord any Congregation whatſoever: So that if a man be wronged by a Seſſion: As for inſtance, if he be unjuſtly cenſured (as it may very readily fall out) he muſt ſit with his wrong, there is no power to right it till Chriſt come in the Clouds: Or if a particular Congregation divide, turn Hereticks, run wrong (as many of

of the *Independent* Congregations doe) there is no Church power to heal the breach, unleſs it be by giving an advice, which they may either follow, or not follow, as likes them beſt. We again grant, That particular Elderſhips have a power from Jeſus Chriſt to Exerciſe Diſcipline in theſe things which concern the Congregation in particular; But as for other things of more publick concernment, that is to ſay, Things that concern other Congregations as well as them, theſe ought to be handled by a Superior Judicatory; And that even in thoſe things of particular concernment, They are lyable to Appeals, and the inſpection of the Superior Judicatory; So that wherein they ſhall be found wrong, partial, or Erronious, They may be called to an account.

For ſhewing the falſhood of this Error, as alſo for the vindicating of the Government of the Church of *Scotland*, that is now ſo much ſpoken againſt, we ſhall labour to make out, with the Lords aſſiſtance theſe *Three* Truths from the word of God. The *firſt* it this: That, beſides the power of Church Government that Chriſt hath given to particular Elderſhips, There is alſo holden forth in his word, A plat-form or a Copy of the Government of many Congregations by one Presbytry over them all in common. The *Second* Truth that we ſhall make out is this: That beſides the Church Government that Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed by Presbytries, there is alſo holden out in the word greater Church Judicatories, to wit, Synods made up of Commiſſioners from ſeveral Presbytries inſtructed with power of

Church Government from Christ also. And *Thirdly*, We shall labour to make out this Truth, That the inferior Judicatories are to be Subject to the Superior; as Sessions to Presbytries, Presbytries to Synods, Synods to General Assemblies: So that the Superior Judicatories have power over the Inferior in the Lord, to receive Appeals from them, and complaints of them, to Censure them for Miscarying in the matter of Discipline, and to enact Church Canons or conclusions binding to them, which Inferior Judicatories are bound to obey in the Lord.

¶ I.

There is a Platform of the Government of many Congregations, by one common Presbytery holden out in Scripture.

COncerning the State of this Question I only premit this, That however we have the very name of this *Presbytry* whereabout we dispute holden out in 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. Whereby I might easily show is meaned the *Presbytry* we plead for, yet we shall not dispute about names; Though the

the Name were not, yet it is sufficient that the Thing be in it, And this we shall make good, to wit, That in Scripture is holden out a pattern of the Government of many Congregations by one common *Presbytry*. The proof of this point we might instance almost in all the Churches that were planted in the Apostles time: As in the Church of *Jerusalem*, The Church of *Antioch*, *Ephesus*, *Thessalonica*, *Corinth*, and of *Rome*: We might easily make it appear that those Churches were not single Congregations, but Presbyterial Churches, under one common Government: But in stead of spending of time in pointing out this in all these Churches, we shall instance it only in the *Church of Jerusalem*; That by this One ye may know what to judge of the rest. And first concerning the Church of *Jerusalem* planted by the Apostles, we shall labour to make out thir two things. 1. That in that one Church there were many particular Congregations. And 2. That all these particular Congregations made up but one Church, and was guided by one common *Presbytry*, and Judicatory, set over them all in common. Which two being made out, the point we intend will appear evidently, to wit, That there was here a Government set over many Congregations in one common Judicatory; such as our *Presbytry* is over all the particular Church-Sessions in the bounds.

The *First* thing we shall make out is this, That there were moe Congregations in the Church of *Jerusalem* than one, and this from four grounds. *First*, From the multitude of Church Members that were

in

in *Jerusalem*. *Secondly*, From the multitude of Pastors, Teachers, and Elders, that were there, moe than could get work in one single Congregation. *Thirdly*, From the diversities of Languages that were among the People of that Church. And *Fourthly*, From the way of their meeting and the place they resorted to for Gods service.

And *first*, For the multitude of Church Members that was at *Jerusalem*, If we compare place with place, we will find that they amounted to many thousands, and so behooved to be moe than one single Congregation. Take a view of some of these places *Acts* 1. 15. they are numbred to be about *ane hundred and twenty*. And *Act.* 2. 41. there are added unto them about *three thousand Souls*: and then in v. 47. There is daily Addition of moe and moe——*the Lord added unto the Church daily such as should be saved*. *Act.* 4. 4. We see yet a greater increase; There are about *five thousand*——*and the number of the men was about five thousand*, concerning which five thousand it is necessarly to be understood that they were added presently, excluding the rest of the numbers before spoken of, For the last part of the *verse* must be exponed according to the first part: *Howbeit*, *many of them which heard the word believed*, Now certainly that is meaned of others besides those that were before added; and so this *five thousand* must be a new number. *Fiftly*, In *Acts* 5. 14. Besides all these it is said *And believers were the more added to the Lord*, *multitudes both of men and Women*. And *Sixtly*, In *Act.* 6. 7. And *the word of the Lord increased*, *and the number*

number of the Disciples multiplied in Jerusalem *greatly, and a great company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith.* They multiplied, and multiplyed greatly; And these were not only the common People, but the leaders and *Priests* also, who doubtless would bring multitudes with them by their example: Now all these being considered, any understanding man may easily conceive, that so many thousands, as these would amount to, behooved to be cast in moe Congregations than one, and could not be one single Congregation.

Before we proceed to the *Second* ground of our proof, we shall shew you first what they say against this: There are *three* things mainly they object: And the *first* is, That the most part of those who were converted by the Apostles were strangers, who had not their dwelling at *Jerusalem*; and so did not remain Members of that Church: And for this they cite *Act*: 2. 8, 9. Where it is reckoned that among the number of the hearers, there were Parthians, *and* Medes, *and* Elamits, *and the dwellers in* Mesopotamia, &c. To this we Answer that though those men came out of those far Countries being Godly men, who come in Expectation of the Messias his coming, who was then expected; yet they were dwellers in *Jerusalem* for that time, and for this see *Act*: 2. 5. *And there were dwelling at* Jerusalem *Jews, devout men, out of every nation under Heaven.* So they had taken up house and were dwelling there: And in v, 14. Where *Peter* began his Preaching he sayes---*Ye men of* Judea, *and all ye that dwell at* Jerusalem, *be*

this

this known unto you, &c. *Secondly*, We answer, dwell where they please, They were Members of this Church at *Jerusalem*; And this appears from several things that are ascribed to them by the Holy Ghost, which cannot be spoken of any but Members of that Church: So in *verse* 47. it is said- - *And the Lord added them unto the Church daily.* - *Secondly*, In *verse* 46. *They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from house to house*, &c. *Thirdly*, In *verse* 45. *They sold their possessions, and gave their Goods into the Church Treasury, for the help of the poor.* And *Fourthly*, We find in *Act.* 6. 5. That they all joyned in choosing the Deacons and Officers of the Church. Now sure these are Actions that belong to none but Church-Members. This for their First Objection.

Their second Objection is this, say they, The Holy Ghost sayeth expresly, that they did meet all *at one place*, as if it were on purpose to evince our Argument, and that the whole multitude did come *together*, As for instance *Act.* 2. 1. it is said, *They were all with one accord in one place*, and in the same Chapter *verse* 46. *They continuing daily with one accord in the Temple*, &c. And it is also said, *Act.* 6. 2. *Then the twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them*, &c. And *verse* 5. *And the saying pleased the whole multitude.* Now to take off this exception which seems to be the most plausible of their Objections: First, Consider what we spoke from the Scripture of their number, and what thousands were in this Church: And let any reasonable man con-

conceive how it could be possible that all those should meet in one place; And therefore that meeting in one place must be taken in another sense: It's observed by the Learned, That the word here turned, *meeting together in one place*, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ doth not always signify a meeting together in one room, but the agreeing of the Affection and Judgement in one thing: And for the clearing of this they cite, *Act.* 4. 25, 26-----*Why did the Heathen rage, and the People imagine vain things? The Kings of the earth stood up, and the Rulers were gathered together against the Lord*, &c. Now it is the same word that is there turned (in one place) which is here turned (gathered together) and certainly no place of Scripture will prove that *Herod*, *Pontius Pilate*, *Jew* and *Gentile* did all meet in one place to consult about the Death of Christ: But only they agreed in one Judgement, and hearty Affection about it: And so the meaning may well be taken thus, in this other place. But yet to speak to these places further: For *Act.* 2. 1. *That they were all with one accord in one place*, It makes nothing against our Argument: For the number was not then so great, as we shew it grew afterwards, and so they might well meet in one place. The same answer we give to that in *verse* 46. *They continuing daily with one accord in the Temple.* They were not then come to the full number that afterward they came to: So that although they might all have continued in the Temple at that time, yet afterwards they could not. And *Secondly*, We answer; It doth not prove the point they bring

it

it for, It is only mentioned They came to the Temple to hear the Word, but not that they were all of one Congregation, partaking of all Ordinances in one place; For it is said afterwards, *They brake Bread from House to House*, meaning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which they did partake of from House to House in their particular Congregations: So that place makes more against our Oppositts than against us: For the other place in *Act.* 6. 5. When the Apostles and Believers were come to a greater extent, yet the Apostles call the whole multitude to them, and it is said, *The saying pleased the whole multitude.* To this we answer, by the *whole multitude* cannot be meaned all before spoken of: And therefore we say, by the *whole Multitude*, is meaned a *great Multitude:* as in that of *Luke* 8. 37. Where it is said, *That the whole multitude of the Countrey of the* Gadarens *round about*, &c. It is not to be imagined that Man and Mother-Son, or every Individual Person came out to meet Christ, but only a great Multitude; or otherwise the whole multitude may be taken, for the whole multitude of those that were present, as *Luke* 1. 10. *And the whole multitude of the people were praying without*, when *Zacharias* was offering Incense. Now this must not be understood that all the multitude of the People of *Jerusalem* was there, but only of the whole multitude that was present. This for their second Objection.

Their *third* Objection is this: Though it be granted that the number of Believers was such before

fore the persecution that fell out, *Act.* 8, 1. Yet when that Persecution came, there were no more left than might meet in a single Congregation, for the Text saith, T*hey were all scattered abroad throughout the region of* Judea *and* Samaria, *except the Apostles*, To this we answer, That if it be granted that there were moe Congregations before this Persecution; then it makes out the point we are to prove. But *Secondly*, Neither do we yeild that which they affirm, That by the persecution mentioned *Act.* 8. 1. The multitude was brought to such a few number, as they could make up but one Congregation; It is said indeed, T*hey were all scattered except the Apostles*: But by this (all) is not meaned all the Professors, but all the Preachers, and there are several reasons to prove it; For it is said, Saul *made havock of the Church*, verse 3. Now if he had meaned that all the Professors were scattered, where should *Saul* have gotten Men and Women to hail to Prison; and that this was done in *Jerusalem*, *Paul* himself acknowledges, *Act.* 26. 10. A *second* thing to prove that this *(all)* that was scattered, was the *(all)* of the Preachers and not of the Professors, is that in *verse* 4. where it is said, T*hey were scatered abroad, every where Preaching the Word*, So that it astricts the scattering mainly to those who were Preachers: For certainly the whole multitude could not have gone to Preach the Word. And T*hirdly*, The Apostles remain still at *Jerusalem*, as appears from the first *verse*, Now to what end and purpose should the Apostles have stayed there behind the rest, except there had been

been several Flocks there, with whom they stayed with the hazard of their Lives to comfort them against the Persecution, which had driven their Preachers from them. But a second answer is, That however they had been so scattered in the beginning of the Persecution, that there was no more of them than made up a single Congregation; yet in process of time they so multiplyed, that they behooved to make up many Congregations: And for this ye may find out several places, as *Act.* 9. 31. *They were multiplied*, and *Act.* 12. 24. speaking of *Jerusalem*, *The word of God grew and multiplied.* But we shall take one place for all, In *Act.* 21. 20. where the Elders relate to *Paul* the exception that the People had taken at him for his going to the Gentiles---- *Thou seest, Brother, how many thousands of* Jews *there are which believe*, &c. Now the word rendered *thousands* in the *Greek* is μυριάδες which signifies Ten Thousands; so there were not only Thousands, but Ten Thousands; yea, and many *ten thousands* there; And so moe than could be Edified in one single Congregation. And that these were of *Jerusalem*, is clear from *verse* 21. *They are informed of thee*, &c. And from *verse* 22.---*the multitude must needs come together*, &c. Now this is from the first ground of our Proof.

2. The second ground from whence we are to prove, That there were moe Congregations in the Church of *Jerusalem* than one, is taken from the multitude of Christs Officers; That there were so many that it had been a shame for them all to wait upon one

flock:

flock: We find the Apostles were there, as in *Act.* 6. 15. about the chooſing of the Deacons: We find they were alſo there in *Acts* 15. v. 6. Now beſides the Apoſtles we find there were other Church-Officers in *Jeruſalem*, as in *Acts* 11. *verſe* laſt. There were Elders there, where he is ſpeaking of *Jeruſalem*, as it appears in *verſe* 27. Beſides there were Prophets in it, as in *verſe* 27. of the ſame Chapter, *And in theſe dayes came Prophets from* Jeruſalem *unto* Antioch. And it is the Judgement of ſeveral Interpreters, that the ſeventy Diſciples whom Chriſt ſent out to Preach, were ſtill at *Jeruſalem*; And that they were of the number of theſe *hundred and twenty* mentioned *Act.* 1. 15. Now let any man conſider if it was likely, eſpecially when the Harveſt was ſo great, That ſo many of the Apoſtles ſhould be ordinary Hearers of the Word, and only one but to ſpeak; eſpecially when we conſider, That when Chriſt ſent out the twelve Diſciples only, he ſent them not out all together, but two by two; and ſo certainly a wiſe man may well conclude, That there behooved to be moe Congregations there than one, yea many Congregations. This is for the ſecond ground of our proof.

The *third* ground is taken from the multitude of Languages that were in *Jeruſalem*; *Act.* 2. 5, 8, 9. 10. 11. and *Act.* 6. Which diverſity did neceſſitate them to enjoy the Ordinances in divers diſtinct Congregations in their own Language; And that it might be ſo, the Spirit furniſhed the Apoſtles with diverſity of Languages.

The fourth ground to prove this point is taken from the way of their Meeting, which was not in void capacious Rooms built for the purpose, as we now have; for they had not then the Civil Magistrate for them, to allow places of meeting for the purpose; but only in private Houses, upper Chambers, Houses allowed to them by private Christians; as *Act.* 2. 46. And surely it cannot be conceived that their Houses could contain so many thousands; and therefore of necessity they could not meet all in one Congregation.

Thus we have made out the first point, That there were moe Congregations than one in *Jerusalem*. We might prove the like in the other Churches of *Ephesus*, *Antioch*, *Corinth*, *Rome*, *Thessalonica*, that there were moe Congregations than one there also: And that from the multitude of Believers the Scripture speaks of, the multitude of Preachers, diversities of Languages; But for brevities cause we pass to the other point, which is the second thing we have to make out, and it is this.

II. That all these Congregations in *Jerusalem* were under one Government, there was one common Judicatory that Ruled them all in common, As our Presbytry is over all the Congregations within its bounds: And for clearing of this we lay down *three* things. The *First* is that although there were many particular Congregations at *Jerusalem*, yet they are called but one Church: so in several places they are called *the Church*, *Act.* 8. 1. 15. 4. &c. And by the way this refutes one of the *Independent* tenets, whereby

whereby they affirm: That the name of *Church* is never given under the New Testament, but to those who meet ordinarly in one place, for the discharging of all parts of Gods Worship. But to the Argument, For what reason could they be called one Church? Not because they met together in one place for the Ministration of the word, Sacraments and Prayer; For those were dispensed to them in their singular Congregations severally, and so certainly they are called one Church; because they were under one Government, one Eldership above them to Govern them: As the Church of *Scotland* is called one Church, because all her Congregations are Governed by one General Assembly.

Secondly, We add to the former, In this one Church, made up of many Churches we find there are Ruling Elders; so we find in *Act:* 15. 4. and *Act:* 21. 15, 18. *And when they were come to* Jerusalem, *they were received of the Church, and of the Apostles and Elders*, &c. Now they are not called the Elders of a particular flock at *Jerusalem*; but the Elders of the Church; and therefore did meet in one Common Judicatory. The force of this Argument cannot be spoken against by our Opposits, who prove their particular Elderships from the same ground as in *Act:* 20. 28. mentioning of the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*; From whence they Reason thus: *Ephesus* was a particular Congregation, we read there were Elders in this Church, therefore there was an Eldership who met together for Governing that Church in common. They must give

us liberty to Reason that same way thus, We find at *Jerusalem* was a Church made up of many particular Churches, we find Elders in this Church; Therefore there was an Eldership who met together for Governing of this Church or these Churches in common.

But Thirdly, to make this Argument yet stronger, not only there are Elders in this Church, but we find they meet together for Acts of Jurisdiction, belonging to the whole Church in Common. For proof of this see *Act.* 11, 30. The contribution that is gathered for supply of the Saints is sent to the Elders: Now what the Elders should do with it, may be gathered from a place like it *Act.* 4. 35. 37. where it is said: *They sold their possessions and laid down the price at the Apostles feet. And distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need.* So doubtless the contribution was given to the Elders, for this end that they might have distributed the same to the poor in the whole Church; And so it was an Act of Government tending to the good of the Church. Further we find this more clear *Act.* 21. 18. They meet together, and Judicially set down a way to *Paul* for removing of a Church Scandal, by satisfying the offended, and purifying himself after the manner of the Jews, In v, 23. *Do therefore this*, &c. So we see their Elderships meeting together for removing a Scandal. We find a *Third* place to confirm this; *Act.* 15. 2. 4, &c. We shall afterward make use of the whole Chapter to prove the power of *Synods*; only this much at pre

presént to the purpose in hand. We find the Elders met, and make binding Acts to the Churches under them. So we have made out the first point, That there is a Government of many Congregations under one Presbytry holden out in the Word.

The main thing our Oppósits flee to at the last is this; That granting it to be true, That there were many Congregations in *Jerusalem* before the Persecution in *Act.* 8. And that they had one Government above them; yet that doth not infer a Government by *Presbytry*; For they were Governed by the Apostles; We read not of any Elders in that Church before the Dispersion, at which time they were brought to so few a number, that they might all meet in one place: So that though there was one common Government then, by Elders; It inferrs not a Presbytry but a Congregational Eldership only. This is the sum of all that is said to this. For Answer, They grant to us, That after the Persecution there was a common Eldership over the Church of *Jerusalem*. And *Secondly*, We have proved that there were moe Congregations than One there, even after the Dispersion: And we have also proved that they had Elders over them in common; so that whatever was before the Dispersion, yet even from their own conceission it followeth, That there was a Presbyterial Government in *Jerusalem* after the Dispersion. *Secondly* we answer, They can hardly prove that there were no Elders in *Jerusalem* before the Dispersion: Its true we read not of Elders until *Act.* 11. But when they were first instituted, we read not.

Thirdly, We answer, That though there were not Elders to govern them in common, yet it is enough for us that the Apostles did govern them in common; for they were also Elders: So they call themselves, 2 *John* ver. 1. 1 *Peter* 5. 1. But *Secondly*, As they were Elders, so what they did in these Acts of Government, they did it as Elders: For what they did as Apostles is not imitable now, but what they did in Governing the Church is imitable, such as Ordaining of Officers, Distributing of Alms. Again, What they did as Apostles, one of them might do it alone; But here they do it *in Collegio*, *Act.* 6. And reserve the Peoples part of Election to them. Now they never met together to write Scripture; nor sought the Peoples concurrence for any Act meerly Apostolick; so it is clear the Church was governed by them as Elders; And so the Churches even then were under one common Eldership. And this now for the first thing we promised to make out, to wit, That the Scripture holdeth out a pattern of the Government of many Congregations by one common Presbytery.

¶

¶ II.

There is a Plat-form of Government by Synods over many particular Presbyteries holden forth in Scripture.

THe *Second* thing we promiſed to make out is this, That as the Scripture holdeth forth the Power of Presbyteries, ſo alſo the Power of a Synod; by which we mean Church Judicatories above Presbyteries, as they are above Seſſions, or Congregational Elderſhips.

I. For underſtanding the Queſtion, Theſe Synods or greater Meetings of Church Officers, are of three ſorts: Some made up of ſeveral Presbyteries, and theſe are Provincial Synods, (ſuch as commonly we have twice a year) Or they are made up of ſeveral Synods within a Nation; and theſe are General Aſſemblies. Or *Thirdly*, They are made up of ſeveral Churches of ſeveral Nations, or Commiſſioners from them; and theſe are called Univerſal Councils, or General Synods of the Chriſtian World. Now all theſe differ from Presbyteries, not only in this, That they are more ample; but alſo in this, That the Government by Presbyteries

is the common ordinary way of Government held out in Scripture: But Synods for the most part are more rare, and upon particular emergents; as *Act.* 15. That Synod was called upon an occasion of Division in the Church of *Antioch*, which troubled other Churches about.

Secondly, All these kinds of greater Synods, The Provincial Synod, and the Synod of a Nation, and the Universal Councils, do not differ in Nature and kind, but only in less and more; Wherefore it is not needful that we hold out every one of them from Scripture, It is sufficient that we hold out the Power of Synods in the general, which is to be applyed to every kind in particular: For so we find it in Scripture in other things. Particulars are infinite; and therefore in things of one and the same kind General Rules are sufficient; Or a Rule for one particular, which keeping the just proportion, is to be applyed to other particulars of the same kind, As *Matth.* 18. Christ sets down the way of walking in private Scandals, speaking nothing of publick Scandals: Not as if Jesus Christ did mean that publick Scandals should be passed over, but that the same Rule may serve for these, keeping the just proportion: Even so is it here; If the nature of Synods be held out in the Word, that is enough, though it speak nothing of the bounds to which they should extend, whether of One Province, or of All the Provinces of a Nation; no more than it is particularly set down in Scripture, what should be the number and bounds of a particular Congregation.

There

There is a *Third* thing for clearing of this Question: The *Independents* and we agree in this, That the word gives ground for meeting of Synods; only we differ about their Power: They grant that in case of Division or Scandal, Synods may meet and give their Advice in Matters doubtful; only they say, that Synods have no Power of Jurisdiction to command others in the Lord to embrace their determinations. We on the other hand maintain that they have this Power, and that the Scripture holdeth out such a Power belonging to them.

II. We might instance this in *Act.* 1, In the choice of *Matthias*, which was done by no particular Church; For here were the Apostles, whose Paroch-Church was the whole world: Here were the Brethren of Christ from *Galilie* v. 14. Some from *Jerusalem* v. 15. This meeting did a Church business of common concernment to the whole Christian World, and so behooved to be done by those who did represent them, And therefore this behooved to be a General Council.

But to clear the point more fully, we shall take *Act.* 15. Where this Synod we plead for is held forth clearly: The History is plain: A difference ariseth in *Antioch* about Circumcision, This cannot be composed in *Antioch* it self; so they send up Commissioners to *Jerusalem* to determine this matter, where there is a Synod of Apostles and Elders, and they determine the Question. Now that it may appear the Synod we plead for is here; consider *first*, That there was a Church meeting or Judicatory here;

None

None may doubt of this, as is clear v, 6. *Secondly*, Consider, That this Judicatory is made up of Commissioners from the several Presbyteries, we see that Commissioners from the Presbytry of *Jerusalem* was there v, 6. And Commissioners from the Presbytry of *Antioch* Act: 15. 2 *Paul* and *Barnabas* and others. Now that these were Commissioners, and had voice appears from *Act:* 16. 4. where the decree that was then made was ascrived to all the Elders who were present. It is very likely that there were other Commissioners there also from *Syria* and *Cilicia*; For they are joyned with *Antioch* in the Letter v. 23. For what other Reason cannot be imagined, except that as they were alike troubled with the Heresy as *Antioch* was, so they had their Commissioners there as *Antioch* had, And therefore these Acts are binding to them in a special manner, However it is clear that there were Commissioners from the Presbytry of *Jerusalem* and of *Antioch*, so the meeting was made up of two Presbytries; And by the same rule it may be made up of moe.

Thirdly, We would consider that this meeting made up of Commissioners from several Presbytries makes binding Acts unto other absent Churches, who were present only in their Commissioners; And there are several things to clear this: *First*, They determine the Question in v, 19. 20 *Secondly*, They impose Their determination on the Churches to be keeped by them: So in the Letters They wrote to the Church of *Syria* and *Cilicia* v, 28. The word that is turned there a *Burthen*, signifies a *Law* or a *De-*

Decree, and so we find it in *Act:* 16. 4. There their *Conclusions* are called *'Decrees which were ordained of the Apostles and Elders at* Jerusalem, *And which were to be keeped:* From all which it is clear They did make Acts binding other Congregations. *Thirdly*, We find they put forth an Act of Censure on the false Prophets v, 24. They called them *Lyars*, A brand of Infamy. It's true They Censured them not with Excommunication, For it was time enough to doe That, when they knew they were become incorrigibly obstinate, according to the common Rule, *An Heretick after the first and second Admonition reject.* By this I hope, ye perceive clearly a pattern for greater Synods, a Judicatory made up of Commissioners from several Presbytries; and these making binding Laws to other Churches, who were absent in their Persons, and only present in their Commissioners

III. Their main Objection against this is, That the Apostles were here, who were guided with an infallible Spirit to determine; and so this can be no Rule for our Synods, made up of men wanting that assistance. To this we Answer, that this if it prove any thing will make against our Opposits themselves as well as against us; For they hold that here is a pattern of a Synod for advice, so if their Argument hold against Us in the One, It must hold also against Them in the Other. *Secondly*, We shew before that the Apostles were also Elders, and sometimes Acted as Elders; Now if it can be proven that they Acted as Elders here, it breaks the strength of their

Ob-

Objection. But this is clear, *First*, *Paul* and *Barnabas* are sent by the Church of *Antioch*, They willingly submit *Act*: 15. 4 Now in their Apostolick Office they were not directed by men, And so surely here they acted not as Apostles. *Secondly*, The Apostles all along go not on that way, as when guided by an infallible Apostolick Spirit; For they state the Question, and debate it in v, 7. Now when they write Scripture, they do not use advice, nor do they debate what they shall conclude, but speake all as immediatly inspired; But here they debate, And having found Truth, By force of Reason they conclude, as any other Assembly, upon like assurance of Scripture warrand, may do, *It seemeth good unto Us being Assembled with one accord*, &c. In v, 25. *Thirdly*, When the Apostles did determine any thing as Apostles. and were guided by the immediatly inspiring Spirit of God, then they did determine the Question fully that nothing needed to be added: But so it was not here, For *Peter* v, 6th gives his Judgment, That Believers were freed from the Ceremonial Law: What he saith is true indeed; Yet it speaketh not fully to the point, untill *James* addeth somewhat, to wit, That however the Gentils were freed from the Ceremonial Law, yet to eschew the Scandal of the weak Jews, They were to abstain from things strangled &c: v, 20. And therefore, They Acted not as Apostles, except we would say, that *Peter* as an Apostle intending to determine a Controversie, yet did not speak fully to the point, which were an injury to that immediately in-

inspiring Spirit, by which they were acted in penning Scripture, *Fourthly*, Because the decrees of the Synod are put forth in the name and by the Authority not only of the Apostles, but Elders also, *Act.* 15. 22. 23. *Act.* 16. 4. *Act.* 21. 25. Now surely ordinary Elders did never concurr with the Apostles in Acts of their Apostolick office; As penning Scripture, &c. From all that is said, it is most clear, that the Apostles here acted as Elders, leaving a Pattern for such like Judicatories upon the like occasions, to the end of the World: Which is the *Second* Point.

¶ III.

Inferior Church Judicatories are Subject to Superiour.

THE *Third* point we have to make out is this: That Inferior Church Judicatories are subordinate to the Superior, as Sessions or Congregational Eldership to Presbytries, Presbytries to Synods, *&c.* So that the greater have power of Government over the lesser: For receiving Appeals from them, Complaints of them, Enacting of Church Canons; unto which the Inferior ought to be subject in the Lord. The point in short is, That par-

particular Elderships are not Independent, so as to do what they please, without being accountable to any Judicatory above them; But Presbyteries are over them in the Lord. We shall follow the former Order: *First*, To clear the Question. *Secondly*, To bring Arguments for the Truth. *Thirdly*, To answer Arguments against the Truth. *Fourthly*, To apply it to Use.

I. For the *First*, We allow unto particular Congregations an Eldership and Power of Discipline within themselves, to judge of these things that are of their particular concernment: But as for things wherein other Congregations are concerned with them, We hold that such do belong to Superiour Judicatories according to the Rule, *What belongs unto all should be handled by all.* *Secondly*, We do not give Power to any one single Congregation above another: We say, That all Congregations (the least as well as the greatest) is equal in Power; This way was the Bishops Tyranny, that made all the Congregations of the Diocess subject to the Cathedral Church, the Parish where the Bishop lived: So that all others were to subject themselves to it, and the great Lord Bishops Laws which he gave out in it. We do only say, That all particular Congregations should be subject to a Presbytery, made up of Elders taken from among themselves, wherein no Congregation can challenge Power more than another: The meanest hath as great Power in them as the greatest. *Thirdly*, We do not say that the Power of Presbyteries or Synods are absolute, so that whatever

ever they conclude should stand for a Law; or that they ought to be obeyed in every thing. We affirme Their Power is a limited and Ministerial Power. It is a Power *in the Lord*; So that put the case, If a Presbytery or Synod should conclude a thing that is wrong, They are not to be followed blindly. We allow to every particular Christian a Judgement of Discretion, whereby they should compare the Acts of Church Judicatories, with the Rule of the Word, and accordingly either to choice or refuse: Only herein we say, *First*, That particular Christians should have a kind of loathness to differ from the Judicatories of the Church, arising from a secret kind of diffidence and distrust of their own Light and understanding; so that although they are not to follow others blindly, yet they are to suspect themselves rather than them; we mean when the matter is dubious. *Secondly*, We say, That when the case comes, that it is evidently seen that Superiour Judicatories have gone wrong, private Christians are to differ from them indeed, yet so as to give great Reverence and Respect to the Judicatory, even when they are necessitate to dissent from their Acts, least by their furious zeal they cast all loose and into confusion.

But to come to the point, The Question is, Whether all the Power of Church Government be in the Hands of particular Elderships; And so if particular Elderships be Independent: Or if Jesus Christ hath warranted Presbyteries to be above them in the Lord. We maintain the last: And

we

We maintain the last: And we clear our part of the Controversy from several Arguments.

II. The *First* Argument is taken from the many defects that are in this way of *Independency*, where the whole Power is put in one Congregation; so as to be countable to none: We shall reckon four or five of these Defects; and indeed very great Defects. *First*, According to this way of Theirs, there is no Authoritative way in Christs Church to right a man that is wronged by a particular Congregation; As put the Case that an Eldership should wrong a man by Censuring him unjustly: According to Their way, He must sit with the wrong, there is no remedy to him till Christ come in the Clouds. There is a second defect according to this *Independent* way of Theirs: There is no Authority in the Church to heal Breaches in a Congregation: Put the case that a People should divide from the Elders, or the Elders among themselves, or that one Congregation may have a contest with another: Now in these cases, suppose both these Parties to be wilful, as too usually it falls out, so as They will not yeild to any Advice, without Authority to back it: Now what remedy is left in such Cases without the assistance of a *Presbytery*, that hath Power over both Parties, to command them in the Lord to do what is right: And can we think that Christ hath left no remedy in his House for such evils, as may so frequently fall out. *Thirdly*, The *Independent* way leaveth no Authoritative mean for holding down Pluralities of Religion; For if so, then let a particular

lar Congregation set up what Religion they please; suppose it be *Popery*: There is no Authoritative mean to hinder it: But in the Way of *Presbytery* it is otherwise: *Presbytery* is Christs Weeding-hook to weed out Heresies; so we observe wherever it is set up it bears Heresy down; And no wonder; For Judicatories are so subordinate, one to another, that what is overseen in the one, is taken notice of in the other. *Fourthly*; By this way of theirs, there is no Authoritative mean for unity and uniformity in the publick service of God among Congregations; But every one being left to themselves, will take a way of Their Own; This Congregation one way, and that Congregation another way; which doubtless would prove a great stumbling block to the weak, not knowing unto what Congregation to joyn, because of the great diversity among all. Put the case (to clear it in some things whereby ye may guess at others) that in one Congregation they would both read and expound, In another, they would only Read: In others the line were not read for singing; And in another, it were read: In some Congregations Children were not Baptized but in time of Sermon, In others, That Baptism were Administrate at other times also: In some Congregations Two Prayers before a Sermon, In another but one: In another the Conclusion Sung, In another not. Now though the Strong would not stumble at these things, knowing that such in their own nature are, for the most part at least, indifferent; Yet to the weak Christian they might prove a ground of stum-

bling; For usually such presently stamp Conscience on that part of the difference which they like best, and hence arise contests, Janglings, and matter of renting the Church. Now there is no way in *Independency* left for preventing of this. *Fifthly*, The way of *Independency* leaves no remedy to a Congregation wanting a Minister, for Tryal of the next that comes; Whose tryal is left wholly to the People by this way of Theirs: How slight that tryal would be, any may judge; How few Parishes can try a Minister in his Abilities, If he be apt to Preach, convince gainsayers, watch against ravening wolves &c. Now this is remeeded in the way of *Presbytery*, according to *Pauls* Rule 1 *Tim*: 4. 14. That Ministers be ordained----*with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.* This for the first Argument, from *Five* great defects in the *Independent* way; Other defects also might be instanced, but these may suffice.

Our *Second* Argument is taken from *Matth* 18. 16. 17. 18. where Jesus Christ layes down a way for the removing of private Scandals, or dealing with an offending brother; From whence we argue thus, If Christ hath laid down a way for gaining an offending brother, how much more for gaining an offending Church: Its above all doubt that a Church may offend, walk inoderly, wrest Justice. Now surely Gods care must be no less of the whole Church than of One Member: So that our consequence holds: but we assume, There is no way to heal the Scandal of an offending Congregation or particular Church, but by compleaning to a Presbyterial Church above them:

them; This is evident, For 1. our Opposites themselves will not censure them-themselves: They cannot be both judge and party. 2. It appears from the rule of proportion, For by that same rule that private Christians are to be compleaned of to that Eldership whereof they are parts, so the Eldership is to be compleaned of to that *Presbytry* whereof it is a part: and if the Christian liberty of the private Christian be not taken away by the one, so neither is the just power of the Eldership taken away by the other.

Our *Third* Argument is from that which we handled before, That in Scripture is holden forth Government by Presbytries over single Congregations, and by Synods over Presbytries, From whence we argue thus, That the way of Governing the Church in the Apostles times was by Presbyteries and Synods; And therefore the Church should still be so Governed. For the first part of our Argument That the way *Then of* Governing the Church was by Presbytries and Synods, it was proved before: So we have only to speak to the *Second* part of our Argument, that therefore the Church should be Governed so now: And to clear this consequence, consider these things. 1. That whatever is recorded of the practice of the Churches in the matter of Government in the Apostles times, can be for no other end but to be a Pattern for imitation to the Churches in after times, For *whatsoever things were written afore times was for our learning and instruction Rom.* 15. 4. 2. Those primitive Churches were planted by the Apostles; Now who can imagine but what the

Apostles did of that kind, was according to the directions given them by Christ; A promise of whose presence they had with them in their Ministry, and if so, then their practice must be a Rule to Generations following 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me*, &c. 3. We make the practice of the Apostles then, to be a Rule for us in other things; As from their practice in giving the People liberty in choising their own Deacons *Act.* 7. We argue, That the People may choise their own officers yet: And from their practise in having Ruling Elders in the Church 1 *Tim.* 5. 15: We argue, That we should have Ruling Elders yet: So from their practice in having the office of Deacons we argue, That we should have them yet: And from their practice in Celebrating the Lords Supper on the Lord's day *Act.* 27. We argue, Therefore we should celebrate it on that day yet. Now if so be that Their practice should be a Rule to us in other things, why not also in Church Government by Presbytries and Synods; especially seeing that we have made out, that Their practice is as clear in this as in other matters. A *Fourth* consideration to strengthen this Argument is this, That the Churches now have these same Reasons to move them to submit to that Government, which the Church in the Apostles times had; and a Law or Practice is still binding, so long as the Reason of the Law remains: Now the Reasons that moved the Church in the Apostles time to submit to Presbyterial Government, was *first*, Because there were many things of common concernment to all the Congregations in *Jerusalem*,

Salem, and therefore they were Governed by one Presbytry as said is: so there are many busineſſes of common concernment to many particular Congregations now, and therefore it should be so yet. *Secondly*, In *Act*: 15. There ariseth a controverſie in *Antioch*, and becauſe the controverſie cannot be composed in the Presbyterial Church of *Antioch*, therefore it is referred unto a Synod made up of many Presbytries, all concerned in it: So there are busineſſes of common concernment to many Presbytries yet, and some that cannot be ended in one Presbytry, and therefore there should be Synods for composing of these things yet. And seeing the Apostles extraordinarly assisted, (one whereof might have composed the Controverſie) would nevertheleſs have a Synodical Convention for ending Controverſies; Much more ought we to do it whose Gifts are far Inferior to Theirs. By all which it remains clear that the practice of the Church then in that point, is binding to us now.

Argument *Fourth*, There is no Pattern of such an *Independent* Congregation, by precept or Practice in the whole Scripture, where one particular Congregation, with one Paſtor, and Their Elderſhip, did Exerciſe or may Exerciſe all Church Government, in all its Acts, and that *Independently*: therefore &c. The Antecedent is true. *First*, An inſtance cannot be given of Ordination of Miniſters by One Congregation. *Secondly*, By precept and Practice Ordination is to be by moe Paſtors than one; as *Act*: 1. 13. *Act*. 6. 2. *Act*: 13. 13. 1 *Tim*: 4. 14.

So it is clear, That it is by Pastors, and many Pastors, and so cannot be by a single Congregation, where there is required, and should be (say they) but one Pastor. As to what they say of the Church of *Corinths* Excommunicating the Incestous man. We Answer, *Corinth* was a Presbyterial Church. And *Secondly*, It proves not that they might Excommunicate *Independently*, For if a Controversie had arisen about it, which they could not have ended among themselves, they were to have their recourse to a Synod, By the same Reason for which the Church of *Antioch* had, *Acts* 15.

Argument *Fifth*, If so be that Congregations be *Independent*, And no benefit of Appeals allowed to the party grieved, Then the state of the Christian Churches were in greater Slavery than the Jewish; But this is absurd; For Christians are in an estate of greater liberty; As appears from *Galat.* 4. 1. Therefore &c. For clearing the first proposition, We lay down these things; *First*, There was a Subordination of Judicatories in the Jewish Church; As might be made out from several places, We take one 2 *Chron.* 19. 8. where there is a Supream Ecclesiastical Judicatory v. 10. The matters they handle come to them from other Judicatories: And *Deut.* 17. 8. Sheweth the matters to be handled by the supream Judicatory are such as had been before the Inferior Court, but found too hard to be judged there; So that here was a Refuge for the party wronged by the Inferiour Court: Now if there be no such Refuge left to Christians, we may certainly say, The state of

Christi-

Christiansis most hard, being left under the Tyrannical sentence of the unjust Eldership, And no power to right them; When the oppressed Jew might appeal to the Superior Judicatory.

We might further argue from this, Whatever was in the Jewish Government that was neither Ceremonial, nor Judicial; but Moral; That is binding to us; For the Moral Law bindeth all alike, and is not abrogate: But this, That there was subordination of Judicatories for the relief of the grieved party among the Jews, was Moral, not Ceremonial, nor Judicial. It is true that all things were determined by an high Priest, among the Jews, who was typical of Christ, and of his supremacy in Judgment: So the Papists argue ill from the high Priest to the Pope: But it is as true, That the Subordination of Judicatories for things of harder knowledge, and relief of the oppressed party, was Typical of nothing; But Moral and of the Law of Nature, which forbids party to be judge; which will naturally follow if there be not Subordination of Courts. Yea further we shall not find that this Law is given to *Moses* in the pattern upon the mount, but was taught by the light of nature to *Jethro*, and by him given to *Moses Exod.* 18. 22. *It shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee*, &c:

III. We come now to Answer Their Objections many whereof we have taken off in the first two Heads. As for the rest we shall not trouble you with those that are frivolous, as indeed the most part are, we shall only pitch on these that seem to

carry some shew of Reason, and whereof they boast most.

Their *first* Objection is from *Matth*: 18. 17. This Church, say they, is a Parochial Church, and Christs mind is that the business should be here ended, without any Appeal from it. Answer Christ means not only a particular singular Congregation, but also, if not mainly, A Presbyterial Church: For *first*, The particular Church cannot sometimes heal the distemper, as when it is divided, or when the Church it self is Scandalous, as oft may fall out by giving a wrong sentence; So that if Christ had meaned only a particular Church should be compleaned to, and in no case a Judicatory above them, then his Remedy should have come short in curing the desease for which he intends it, which to say were no small imputation to Jesus Christ. *Secondly*, Christ here alludes to the Government of the Jewish Church, as appears from the Censure of the Obstinate to be reputed as an *Heathen*, the same which was among the Jews: And from the plainness of the speach, *Tell the Church*; Which could not be otherwise understood, if he had not alluded to the Jewish Judicatory, besides which, They knew no Judicatory, for such offences as Christ spoke of to them, There being as yet no particular Church which had given its name to Christ. Now (as we cleared before) the Judicatories among the Jews which were to be complained to for Scandals, were not only these who were in their single Synagogues or Congregations; But also Superior Courts, to which it was Lawful to Appeal from

from the leſſer Courts. *Thirdly*, Chriſt meaneth here of ſuch a Church, as were the Churches of *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, &c. But theſe (as we have already cleared) were Presbyterial Churches or Judicatories, having the overſight of many Congregations: Now ſure theſe being the firſt Churches inſtituted by the Apoſtles, muſt not be excluded from the power of Government given by Chriſt to his Church in that place.

Their *Second* Objection is this, That the Dependency of Churches upon Presbytries layeth on a yoke of Tyranny and Subjection upon particular Congregations, equal to the Tyranny of Biſhops: And if the Church muſt be in bondage, it is better to be ſubject to one Lord Biſhop, than under a number of Miniſters and Elders in Presbytry or Synod. For Anſwer, We make no other Subjection here than what the *Independents* themſelves make; For they make Ten in a Congregation ſubject to Five hundred, and the Lawes of the Five hundred to be binding to the Ten: So make we many Churches to be ſubject in the Lord to all their own Paſtors and Elders, conveened in a Presbytry; What more Subjection is there in the one than in the other? *Secondly*, It is an unjuſt compariſon to compare Biſhops Tyranny with Presbytries. For 1. The Government by Biſhops was Humane, This is Divine. 2. The Biſhop being but One Man did by himſelf alone Govern, and that *ad Arbitratum*, Nor had he Any to Anſwer to; But here moe Paſtors and Elders are joyned together, who are by mutual advice to Rule Gods People,

People, according to the Word of God. 3. The Government by the Bishop was altogether extrinsecal to, or without the Particular Churches: For the Bishop was none of their Members, nor yet chosen by them; But Presbyteries and Synods are not so, They are wholly made up of Members and Commissioners from those same very Churches, where They govern, and so it is wholly intrinsecal. 4. We say Government by Presbyteries is so far from being in its own nature Tyrannical, as that it is the greatest remedy against Church Tyranny; because it is a City of Refuge, for all these who are oppressed in their particular Congregations; For if in the Independent Government one be wronged, he must sit with it, till Christ come and right him: Neighbour Churches may advise and request, but the Congregation advised, is not bound to follow it; But here when the Eldership doth wrong, there is a refuge to a Presbytery, and above them to a Synod, *&c.*

Object: 3. Government by Presbytery layeth upon Ministers and Elders the Charge of other Flocks than these of whom the Lord made them Overseers, *to wit*, The Charge of all the Churches in the bounds of the Presbytery: They are Elders to all these Churches; because they govern them. *Answer*, It followeth not that they have the Charge of all these Congregations in particular, and in every thing that concerns the Duty of an Elder; so that they are bound particularly to Catechize, to Visit, *&c.* Only They are Elders to them in things common to all.

And

And as they are joyned in the Court with others: And this is not absurd, for in our Parliament, Commissioners from Shires are Judges to the whole Kingdom: But how? It is as they are joyned in Parliament, not by themselves alone; It is in matters common to the Shire, not in other petty particular Affairs; And so it is here, They are Elders to all the Congregations indeed, as they are joyned together in the Presbytery; But not by themselves alone: In things of common concernment to the whole particular Congregation, not in these Duties belonging to every Congregation in particular.

Object. 4. If this Subordination, and Judicatory above Judicatory were of Divine Institution, Its like Scripture would have spoken more plainly of it; not leaving it to be drawn out by so many far fetch'd Consequences. *Answer,* We have already given sufficient Warrand for this Government by clear Consequences from Scripture; And Consequences from Scripture are Scripture, else we must cast at many points of Divine Truth which have no other ground but Scripture Consequence: As the Trinity; and Change of the Sabbath; yea we see Christ himself grounding a material point, *to wit,* The Resurrection, upon Scripture Consequence, *Mark* 12. 26. 2. We must not teach God how to set down his mind in Scripture; We perchance think, It had been a plainer way to have cast matters of Religion to so many Heads; By which means many Controversies should have been shunned; But He hath thought otherwise: The Lord in Wisdom hath scattered the

par

parcels of every Truth through his Book, intermixing it with other Subjects, as the Gold is in the Mine, and this to exercise his people in searching out his mind from Scripture.

IV. In the last place, We come to make some *Use* of what is said. And the first *Use* is this, If it be so that this Government by Presbytery is grounded on the word of God, Then ye would know it is not a thing of nought we are contesting for, It's a part of that Truth once delivered to the Saints, and a Truth of no small concernment: What would become (think ye) of Particular Congregations, If they had none above them to call them to an account? What Divisions, Strifes, Heresies, Schisms would ensue; if people were informed of these Contests that have fallen out among our Opposits themselves, where this way of *Independency* was followed; The one half renting from the other, Excommunicating one another? It might make moderate Men fear at it: But we need seek no other evidence of this, than by looking on *Scotland* and *England* these years by past. In the Church of *England*, *Presbytery* could not be set up, *Independency* was pleaded for, and practised; And what is become of it, Sathan hath vomited out a floud of Errors, that there were never more, nor more gross in any time of the Christian World; Yea all the rotten Graves of old Heresie are digged up, and now avowed: *Socinianism*, In denying Christs Righteousness in the matter of Justification: *Anabaptism*, In denying the Baptizing of Infants: *Arianism*, In denying the Trinity: And many other such

such like. Yea there are some Errors there that were never before heard of: Some affirming, There is no Church they can joyn with: And therefore, They turn *Seekers*. Some are above all Preaching, Prayer and all Ordinances: And all these are the Fruits of *Independency*. Again, look on the Fruits of the *Presbyterial* Government in *Scotland* where it hath been in Vigour, God hath made it an Hammer for battering down the beginnings of Error: So that these twelve years bypast not any one Error hath come to any Strength: And this all under God from Presbyterial Government, being His Institution: Our Judicatories were indeed terrible, as an Army with Banners, though indeed we are now like to turn contemptible. God himself heal our Breaches.

Secondly, Guard against the Errors that would draw you from this Truth; If ye cannot carry the grounds we have been speaking of with you, yet ye may remember ye once heard this Truth confirmed from Scripture and Reason; That so when ye meet with temptations to quite it, ye may advise well before ye yeild.

I would press this so much the more, As that this Doctrine of Presbyterial Government is the Butt of Sathan's Envy, the thing he would have most gladly overthrown, As that which stands most in his way; For so long as it stood in its integrity, We might in the Lords strength have defied the Devil to have brought Error into *Scotland*. And indeed it is the thing he sets himself to brangle, To get the hedge once plukt up, that so the wild Boar

of

of the wilderneſs may come in. And (believe me) there is nothing makes me more affraid, than that through Gods permiſſion, the Devil ſhall get a deludge of Error brought in on *Scotland*; Becauſe thoſe who have been intruſted with this Government have weakned the power of it, by Diviſions among our ſelves; A copy is caſten How that Erronious Spirits need not ſtand much on the Authority of Aſſemblies, when they would croſs their Deſigns: We are affraid; yea we may be paſt fear and conclude, That Presbyteries, Synods, &c. have loſt much of the weight They had lately in mens conſciences. Only let me intreat you in the bowels of Chriſt, That ye would put a difference betwixt the Government it ſelf, and the Perſons who are intruſted with it; Doe not charge the faults of the one upon the other: The beſt things that are may be abuſed; And it is Peoples Tryal to put difference between the good of a thing, and the Abuſe of it. The Government is good, and of God; and the abuſe of it is evil and of men: What is of God, cleave to it, and ſtick faſt by it; what is from mens corruptions, mourn for it: Pray themſelves may get a ſight of it: And thus ye ſhall walk in an even way. Ye had need to deal with God to ground you in the knowledge of theſe things; For we know not how ſoon we may be put to it, to quite them: Only remember They are Truths ye have ſworn to maintain with your hands lifted up on high.

SECT.

SECT: V.

A SHORT REFUTATION OF THE ERROR OF Separation.

Head I.

Shewing what is required for making one a Member of the Visible Church.

WE have gone through these Controversies, which are about the Government of the Church: We are now to refute some dangerous Errors of Doctrine. And *first*, We shall begin with the Error of *Separation*. The

The Errors of *Separatists* are many, but we shall only engage with two Heads of them, which are the main. The *first* is That which they teach concerning the Constitution of the Visible Church; Or who it is that should be received Members of Christs visible Body. The *second* is That which they hold to be the duty of every sincere Christian, viz. That when they spy any corruption in a Church wherein they are Members, as if Persons Scandalous be admitted to the Lords Supper (seeing they ought all to be Gracious who come there) Then (say they) It is their duty to keep back from the Communion; and not only so, but to quite That Church, and set up a new Church of Their own. We shall begin first with that Doctrine that concerns the Constitution of Visible Churches. And therein we shall follow our usual Order: *First*, Clear the Question. *Secondly*, Bring Arguments for the Truth. *Thirdly*, Answer those they bring against the Truth. And *Fourthly*, Apply the whole to some Use.

I. *First*, For clearing of the Question, ye would know what Church it is concerning which the Controversy is. *First*, It is not that place where Gods people meet to go about Gods publick Worship, (such as this House we now are in, which is called the Church by a Figure, improperly) But it is the People gathered together in it; which People are really and properly the Church; although the House be so called, because it contains them, by an usual Figure. The Church that we are to dispute of, is made up of Men and Women: And not

that

that which is built of Timber and Stone. *Secondly*, The Controversy betwixt Us and Them is not concerning the Invisible Church, that is called the Church of the First-born, Those who by vertue of their Effectual Calling are united to Jesus Christ the Head, are living Members of His Mystical Body, and draw Spiritual Influence from him. Concerning the Church taken in this Sense, There is no Controversy betwixt Us and the *Separatists*, but that the Members of this Church are only made up of Believers, are all gracious, because this Church is Christs Mystical Body, a Royal Priest-hood, the Lambs Wife, all fair, undefiled.&c. *Thirdly*, The Question Then is concerning the Church Visible, which is, a Company of Men and Women, who have according to the Tenor of Gods Covenant with the Visible Church, an Outward Ecclesiastical (which is in its kind a real) Right to enjoy the Outward Priviledges of the Children of God.

This being the Church, about which the Controversy betwixt Us and the *Separatists* is, We shall speak a litle to clear what is meaned by it; And *First*, The Church is called Visible, not because the Members of it may be seen: For in that respect the Church Invisible, the Church of Believers, may be called Visible; For the Members of it being believing Men and Women, may be seen also: But the difference betwixt the Churches in those two Senses, is taken from that which makes one to be a Member of the one Church, as it differs from that which makes one a Member of the other. That which makes One man a

Member of the Invisible Church, is True Grace, sincere Faith, inward Marks thereof: Now Grace is a thing that cannot be seen by another certainly: Its true there are outward effects of it; but they are such, that a Hypocrite may have the counterfeit of them, so as the one cannot be discerned from the other by a Beholder. The nature of Grace is only known Infallibly and certainly to God; And therefore This Church is called Invisible. Again that which makes a Man or Woman a Member of the Visible Church is something that may be seen, something that may be judged of, by those who have Power to receive Members into the Church, and cast them out from it. *Secondly*, We said that this Visible Church is a Company or Society of Men and Women, that have an Ecclesiastical Right to enjoy the Outward Priviledges of the Sons of God. For understanding what is meaned by enjoying of Outward Priviledges, we shall show you That there are Outward Priviledges, and Inward Priviledges of those who are the Sons of God. Inward Priviledges are Jesus Christ himself; a Right to him, a saving Right to the Covenant of Grace, and Life Eternal; These are the Inward Priviledges of the Sons of God: And only Believers have right to those: Painted Hypocrites have no right to them. But *Secondly*, There are Outward Priviledges of the Sons of God; such as these, To be ordinary Hearers of the Word Preached: To be taken a care of by Jesus Christ his Servants: To have liberty to come to the Sacraments: These are Outward Priviledges,

And

And these are Priviledges that a Member of the Visible Church hath a right to. We said they had an Ecclesiastical Right or a Church Right to them: That is, such a Right as gives Warrand to the Church for receiving them to enjoy these Priviledges, and yet possibly they have not a Right to them before God: As for Example, when there is a painted Hypocrite in a Congregation, who makes Conscience seemingly to use the Means: That man hath an Ecclesiastical Right to come to a Communion; such a Right as may Warrand the Minister for admitting of him, although he have not a Right to come before God; God will challenge the Hypocrite for coming, and not the Minister for suffering him to come. Yet we are still to consider that tho' this Ecclesiastical Right be not Saving, yet it is Real in its kind, being founded upon Gods Covenant with the Visible Church, and his Ordinance of admitting such therein. Now ye may know somewhat by this, what we mean by an Ecclesiastical Right, it's That which gives warrand to Church Officers to admit a man to enjoy these Outward Priviledges: And so ye may know what we mean by the Visible Church whereof we Dispute.

There are several differences betwixt Us and the *Separatists*, Concerning the Visible Church. First, They affirm That there is no Visible Church on Earth; But a single Congregation; As many as may meet in one place. This we refuted in the former Controversie, by shewing That in the Church of *Jerusalem* there were far moe than could meet in

one single Congregation; yea many particular Congregations; And yet are called but One Church. *Secondly*, They differ much from us, as also from the Truth, concerning the power They give to this Visible Church, They give them the full power of Church Government, and that *Independently* from any Chuch power on earth: This difference also we spoke of in the preceeding Debate; And so we shall stand now no longer upon it. *Thirdly*, We differ concerning That which gives a Being to the Church Visible; They say, To make a Society of People a Visible Church, so as to have right to partake of the Priviledges there of, It is requisite that all the Members of that Society Swear a Covenant one to another, wherein they bind themselves to submit one to another in the Lord, to walk in all the Ordinances of God, and not to leave that Society till liberty be given them by the rest: So that tho a man should be never so truely Godly and Gracious, yet if he take not such a Covenant, and if he Swear not such an Oath, He is without the Visible Church, He is in the state of a Pagan, to live and to die without any Church Ordinance.

The Judgement of our Church, and that of Truth herein is this, That wherever a man comes out of one Particular Congregation (which we call a Paroch) to another, By his so doing he comes under a duty and Obligation, which he is bound to before God, and the Congregation also, to discharge himself in; Namely all the Duties pertaining to a Member of that Particular Congregation or Paroch to which he

he comes, Although he Swear not such an Oath. We say, *Secondly*, he may also Swear to do these Duties. But *Thirdly*, To bind this on all the Consciences of the Members of the Church, to take such an Oath, so as if they take it not They are not Church Members; We say, It is Will Worship not commanded by God, either by Practice or Precept, in Old or New Testament. We might easily prove that Jesus Christ never took This way to gather a Visible Church.

But the main difference is the Fourth, and that is Concerning those who are to be kept or received Members of the Church Visible; Or who they are that have right to these Outward Priviledges we spoke of: That which they hold in this Point is, That they would have all Visible Churches dissolved, and then Churches gathered out of these, wherein none are to be received or admitted to partake of Church Priviledges, so as to be under the care of Ministers, Admitted to the Sacraments &c. but those who have evident positive signes of Grace, and these not only evident to the Minister and a few moe, but to all the Members of the Congregation, so that every one in the Congregation must be convinced, so far as men can attain unto, that he hath Grace, or else he is no Member of the Visible Church; by which Rule they model Congregations; But there was never a Congregation since Christ was on the earth so constitute, except Their Own; For according to this Rule they will cast out the Two Part, and of some Congregations, leave Ten Parts and take

but the Eleventh, leaving all the rest as Pagans, without Baptising their Children, or admitting themselves to any Church Priviledge: This is what They hold. As for the Judgment of our Church, and that which is according to the Word, take those Assertions.

First, We hold that every man indeed that is a Member of the Visible Church ought to have Grace; so that he sins against God and his own Soul if he have it not; And all the privilegdes he enjoyes will do him no good without it. We say in this respect, all the Members of the Church ought to have Grace; But to say, That they so ought to have Grace, that none of them must be admitted to be a Member of the Church Visible without it, This we deny: It is ill reasoning from unanswerableness to an obligation to a forfaulture of Priviledges: For every man that is a Magistrate ought to have Grace; so as he sins against God if he have it not; yet a man may be a lawful Magistrate, and have the Priviledges of a Magistrate, although he have not Grace.

Secondly, We do willingly grant that in the Constitution of our Church, and admitting of People to the Lords Table: Our Practice comes far short of the Rule; There is not that care taken to purge out scandalous persons as should be, Our practice is indeed short of the Rule; But Our Rule which we shall hold out (as we shall prove) is Good. To know then what is the Rule according to which we should admit men to be Members of the Church. *First*, There are some who are admitted to some Priviledges only, and not to all; as to Baptism: And these

these are Members of the Church Incompleatly, They are Members, but not so fully; And those are, Infants that are born within the Church Visible; They are Members, although not to be admitted to the Lords Supper. Now betwixt Us and the *Separatists* herein, to wit, whether Infants should be Baptized, there is no difference. *Secondly*, There are some who are admitted to all Priviledges of the Visible Church; And those are Members Compleatly and fully: And concerning those the dispute is: Who are those that ought to be admitted to all the common Priviledges of the Visible Church? They mantain (as we heard) that none should be admitted but those that can give evident Signs of Grace to the satisfaction of the Consciences of all within the Church. We hold *First*, That if it be known that Men be Baptized. And *Secondly*, If they be free of Scandal. And *Thirdly*, If they submit themselves to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and have some competent knowledge of the Grounds of the Christian Religion, If these things I say be in a man, We hold that he is to be received, although he cannot give evident signes of the reality of the Grace of God in him to All. And this is the Controversie.

II. Now we come to prove that which we hold by Arguments. The first is *John* the *Baptist* did not follow this Rule of Theirs in receiving Members to the Church, and therefore it is not the right Rule: That *John* the *Baptist* did not follow this Rule will appear, if we consider Luke 3. Wherein consider, Who it was whom John Baptized v, 21. *Now when*

all the People were Baptized, &c. It was *all the People*. Consider *Secondly*, What he requires of this People before he Baptize them, We shall find in the preceeding words that he seeks no more than that they would be convinced that they were wrong before. And *Secondly*, Profess an earnest desire to amend. So we find in v, 10. *And the People asked him, saying, what shall we do?* And the publicans in the 12. v, do the same, who yet were but Course Men. And in the 14. v, *The souldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, what shall we do?* Now these Questions import this much, That they were convinced they were wrong, and professed at least a desire to become better: And accordingly *John* instructs them, thus and thus ye shall do; And without more ado in v, 21. He Baptizes them. Now it is not possible that *John* could have got positive signes from every one of them to convince him that they had real Grace; Far less That every one of the multitude could have been perswaded in Conscience of the reality of Grace in each other; And therefore the Rule of admiting men to be Members of the Visible Church cannot be this, That every one to be admitted should have evident signes of Grace, satisfactory to the Consciences of all: *John* sought not this of those whom he received, It's true he fals very sharply on the Scribes *Matth.* 3, v, 7-----*O generations of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.* But it is as true, when he hath rebuked them, as ill as they were before, seing now they professed a desire to amend, he Baptizes them in v, 11. *I indeed Bap-*

Baptise you with water &c. The same (*You*) whom he spoke to in v. 7. As is clear from the Connexion of every Verse. If it be Objected that they were not received to be Members of the Church, although they were Baptized. We shall once for all clear that Baptism sealeth up a mans right of Membership in the Church Visible. We find this from the Apostles Practice *Act*: 2. 41. Where the Way is how they received men to be Church Members, it is said *They were Baptized* &c. And those who were Baptized are said to be *added to them* and *added to the Church* v. last, So in *Act*. 8, 38. The Eunuch was received by Baptism to be a Member of the Visible Church. So *Saul Act*: 9. 18. And *Lydia Act*. 16, 15. *Secondly*, Circumcision was a seal of the Jews right of Membership in the Visible Church under the Old Testament, And therefore Baptism is a seal of our right to be Members of the Visible Church under the New; For Baptism in the New Testament is come in the same place with Circumcision in the Old Testament. This is for our first Argument.

The second Argument is taken from the practice of the Apostles, And it is this, The Apostles went not by that method of our Opposits in admitting Members of the Visible Church, This was not the Rule They followed: Therefore it is not the right one. We clear this was not the Rule which they followed from *Act*. 2. 41. Where in one day there are *three thousand added to the Church*. Now surely none can imagine that it was possible that every one of these

three

Three thousand could be perswaded in conscience of the regeneration of one another. It is true *Peter* binds on them to Repent; But it is as true that on their desire to be admitted to be Members of the Visible Church, and some evidence of their conviction, he receives them; Although there were many of them did not even this much in sincerity. For *Ananias* and *Saphira* were but Hypocrits; So no more is required of *Simon Magus Act.* 8. 13. And so of *Demas*, who afterwards forsook *Paul.* Yea if we look to the Rule which Christ walked by, He sought no more but a profession to follow him, and He sought no more of *Judas*, to make him not only a Member of His Society, but an Apostle and Minister; Christ knew him well enough to be a Hypocrite: And yet upon his professed desire to follow him, admits him to his Company, yea makes him a Minister: So that this Rule which *Separatists* so much cry up, was neither followed by Jesus Christ nor his Apostles.

The *Third* Argument we bring is this, There was never a Church before or since Christs dayes whose Members, All of them, could give evident signes of Grace to each other; And therefore it cannot be a Rule of Gods appointing, That the Church Visible must be made up of only such. We prove the Antecedent; Sure the Church of *Israel* in *Moses* time was not such, every Member was not such a Visible Saint, so as he was known to be Gracious; For sayeth *Moses Deut.* 29. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive*, &c. and oftimes they are up-

upbraided as ſtiff-necked. *Secondly*, We muſt ſuppoſe the pureſt Churches comming neareſt the Rule, to have been in the Apoſtles dayes, and yet the Members of thoſe Churches were not of this kind. So the Church of *Corinth* was a Church that the Apoſtles themſelves planted and Preached to, and yet we ſhall find many in this Church who were ſo far from giving evident ſignes of Grace one to another, That there were many there *Sciſmaticks* 1 *Cor*: 6. Many there *Fornicators* that *Paul* writes againſt: There were many there *Drunkards*, yea and drunk about the time of the Lords Supper. And thoſe he reproves 1 *Cor*: 11. Yea there were ſome there who denyed ſome of the fundamental Points of the Chriſtian Religion as the *Reſurrection*: As appears from *Chap*: 15. So this Church of *Corinth*, was not ſuch. *Secondly*, The ſeven Churches of *Aſia* ſpoken of *Revel*: 2. 3. were Churches that had the Candleſtick among them, Churches that were in Chriſts hand, that he took a care of, and yet they were not ſuch, as every Member of thoſe Churches had real ſignes of Grace, otherwiſe the Spirit of God would not have ſaid ſo often, *If any man have ears to hear* &c. If he had not ſuppoſed that there had been in them blind, obdurate, carnal hearers. *Thirdly*, The ſame may be ſaid of the Churches of *Rome*, *Galatia*, *Theſſalonica*, and of all the Churches that ever we hear or read of ſince Chriſts days, never one of them was ſuch: And therefore we may ſafely conclude that this Rule of Theirs cannot be Right, ſeing neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles nor the Church in any Age did follow it. We

We bring a *Fourth* Argument and it is this: That cannot be a right Rule of gathering Churches, that would hold out a number of Gracious Souls from being Members: But, this Rule of Theirs would do so: Therefore, it cannot be the right Rule. For the first part of our Argument none will doubt of it. And *Secondly*, That this Rule of Theirs would hold out many truly Gracious, we prove it: For first there are many that have Grace, that for want of parts they cannot express the thing they have, they are so far from giving evidences of Grace to others, that they cannot satisfy themselves; Some so Proud, some so Passionate, so Worldly, so Talkative, so Imprudent, that it will be hard for any to satisfy themselves that there is Grace in them. *Thirdly*, The way of some is so hid, or rather Gods way in them so hid, that for any thing People can see in them, they are nothing different from Natural Civilians, and yet many of such will make clear and satisfying discoverys of Gods Grace in them at their death: The work of Grace then appearing that was long under ground. And now according to this Rule of Theirs, these are all to be holden out of the Visible Church, and put in the place of Pagans; And so That cannot be Christs Rule.

Our fifth Argument to prove the point is this, That cannot be a Rule of admitting Members to the Church Visible, which puts the Church in perpetual danger of Renting: But, this Rule of Theirs puts the Church in a perpetual danger of being Rent: Therefore, it cannot be the right Rule.

We

We shall clear that this Rule of Theirs puts the Church in a perpetual hazard of being Rent: For there are some more easy to be satisfied of the signes of Grace than others, so That which will be a lawful Church to one, will not be so to others. *Secondly*, There are some that in progress of time will grow more strick in searching: Hence that which was a true Church to him the last year, will be no Church to him this: And so this Rule of Theirs keeps the Church in a continual hazard of being Rent, of Separating after Separating, while they cast off all. This hath made the most part of all Their Churches rent, and one part to Excommunicate another. Yea hence many of that Way cast off all Churches at last, and turn *Seekers*; Cast off all Serving God with others, all use of publick means, only serving God apart and by themselves alone; Because they cannot be sure enough that any others have Grace but only themselves.

There is a *Sixth* Argument taken from the similitudes and comparisons under which the Church Visible is holden forth in Scripture; which similitudes do shew there is not That strictness required in admitting Members to the Visible Church as the *Separatists* judge; It's compared to a *Draught net* cast into the Sea, that gathereth fishes good and bad *Matth:* 13. *Secondly*, To a Field wherein is *Wheat* and *Tares*, *ibid.* *Thirdly*, It is compared *Matth:* 22. to a Table of Guests, where there are some with, and some without a Wedding Garment. *Fourthly*, It is compared to a House wherein are Vessels of Ho-

Honour and Dishonour; and to a Fold of Sheep, and Goats; And in every Church there are many Called but few Chosen: Now how shall *Tares, chaff, Goats*, &c. give convincing signes of that which they have not: Certainly these Similitudes seem to speak, That there needs not so much Waling or Picking out, in admitting Members to the Visible Church, providing they be free of Scandals; Once take them in, and and then let the Word work on them; This great Waleing and Separation will be when the Net comes to the shoar, when the great Harvest comes, when the Sheep and Goats are severed. This much for Arguments for the Truth.

III. We shall in the next place answer Their Objections, whereby they labor to prove, that the Church Visible should only be made up of such Church members as can give satisfactory Signs of Grace to each other.

Obj. 1. Their first Objection (which is the most specious) is taken from these Glorious stiles given to the Church in Scripture. They are called Saints; a chaste Virgin espoused to Christ; Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty; and Christs mystical Body, whose Members are all Gracious: Now, say they, seing the Church hath these Stiles in Scripture, Should any be joyned to the Church, but such, who to the uttermost of our discerning have Grace? For answer, If this Argument conclude any thing, it will conclude that none should be Members of the Visible Church, but those who have Real Grace; for none is a partaker of Christs Mystical Body, the Lambs Wife *&c.* But such only:

Now

Now this, our Opposites themselves will not affirm, They grant there may be painted Hypocrites in the Church, and the Scripture saith the same; for *Ananias* and *Saphira*, *Judas*, and *Simon Magus*, were such; and so these places of Scripture, if they prove any thing, will prove more than They will grant. But to answer directly, ye would know that in the Church Visible there is a Company of Good and Bad, sincere Christians, and painted Hypocrites: Now the Scripture speaks of them sometimes according to the Better Part, and sometimes according to the Worse Part; where it speaks of them according to the Better Part, it speaks so of them as if there were not One Evil Man among them all, hence are these Stiles, The *Lambs Wife, Sons and Daughters of the Almighty, Called to be Saints*, &c. They are so according to the Better Part. Again when it speaks of the Visible Church according to the Worse Part, it gives such names as if there were not One Good Man among them all; it calls them *Stif-necked*, a *Rebellious house*, *Children that are Corrupters*; Now, As it were ill Argued, to conclude from these places where such stiles are given to the Church, that every one within the Church were *Corrupters*, *Stif-necked*, &c. and *not one seeking God*: For there he gives them those Stiles from the Evil Part among them: So it is also ill argued from these places where the Scripture calls them the *Lambs Wife, Sons and Daughters of the Almighty*, &c. That they were All of them so; And we shall clear it more fully from the Church of *Corinth*, 2 *Cor*, 6, 18. They get many Glorious stiles, They are called

The

The Sons and Daughters of the Almighty, they are called *A chaſt Virgin*, &c. 2 *Cor.* 11, 2. Now there were many Schiſmaticks among them, ſome denying the Reſurrection, ſome Vilifying *Pauls* Doctrine, Many who were Contentious, Drunkards, Fornicators; ſo that theſe Stiles cannot be Verified of the Members of the whole Church, but only of the Better Part that was among them: even as men ſpeaking of an Heap of Chaff and Corn, will call it An Heap of Corn; Not that there is nothing but Corn in it, but becauſe the Corn is the Beſt Part: And ſo the Church Viſible (wherein is a mixed Company) is denominated from the Better Part ſometimes in Scripture, and called Sons and Daughters of the *Lord Almighty*; and ſometimes from the Worſe Part, and called *Stiff-necked*, &c.

Obj. II. Their ſecond Objection is taken from *Act.* 2. 47. Where it is ſaid ----- *And the Lord added unto the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* Say they, God added no other to the Church but ſuch as would be ſaved, therefore we ſhould adde no others. For Anſwer, If any thing follow from this, it would follow that none ſhould be added to the Church but theſe who are Believers really, for no other will be ſaved: But this is againſt themſelves: And therefore our ſecond Anſwer is this, That the meaning of the words muſt be, That He had a chief care of adding thoſe to the Church who were to be Saved: But it is not ſaid that He added no other; for the ſame Chapter ſayes, He added moe; *v.* 41, whole *three Thouſand* were added, and yet all thoſe were not to

be

be saved; For there were *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and doubtless many other Hypocrites among them.

*Obj.*III. The third Objection is taken from *Matth.* 22. 12. In the Parable concerning the Kings Banquet, where he bids his Servants go and invite to the Marriage, and finding One wanting the Wedding Garment (says he)----*Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding Garment?* Now (say They) this is a reproof to those who admitted him to this Priviledge. We Answer, This is quite contrair to the scope of the Parable, if we look to the command v, 9, *Goe ye therefore into the high-ways*, &c. They are commanded to invite all, and to hold out none for want of the Wedding Garment; For that being Inward is only discernable by God. Indeed this Parable will shew this much, That Ministers may admit People to Communions, and yet Christ will come with an after search, and find many there whom he will cast, that Ministers have admitted: Ye ought not to think that every man that comes through a Ministers Tryal is in a good state; The place says, That Christ found One wanting the Wedding Garment; But it sayes not That Ministers should let none come but those that had the Wedding Garment; And to shew that this is the scope of the Parable, see v, 14. There it is said, *For many are called, but few are chosen.*

*Ob.*IV: Their fourth Objection is taken from *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. The Lord speaking there to the Church of *Ephesus*, sayeth, *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love Remember*

therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candelstick out of his place, &c. From whence They argue thus: None are to be admitted to the Church who will ruin the Church But, all those who cannot convincingly prove their Regeneration, will ruin the Church: Therefore they ought not to be admitted. We Answer, That the last part of their Argument is false: For there are many Gracious Persons keeping their first love, who yet can neither satisfy themselves nor others in the Truth of their Regeneration, and that will not ruin the Church. *Secondly*, We Answer, To the first part of their Argument, where they say that every one who hath not real Grace will ruin the Church: It is not universally true, for then there should be no Hypocrites in the Church at all, neither known nor unknown, for Hypocrites can do no other thing but that which is tending to the ruin of the Church; Now themselves will not say That all Hypocrites are debarred; For they admit some such; and Scripture saith the contrair in the admission of *Annanias* and *Saphira*: And so some must be admitted, who, If God look not more to his own mercy than to their merit, and more to the respect he hath to others than to them, can do nothing but ruin the Church.

Obj. V. Their last Objection is taken from 2 *Tim*: 3. 5. Having *a forme of Godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.* Therefore none are to be admitted but those who can give satisfactory

signes

signes of their Regeneration. For Answer: It is a gross mistake; For if we look to the place, Those who have only a forme of Godlineſs, he tells what they are, *High-minded* &c. v. 4. And in the 6 v. *Subtile Heretiks* who lead away the simple. Now we say none such ought to be admitted, for those are Scandalous: But what they say doth not follow; For many cannot give satisfactory Signes of their Regeneration, who yet are not Gross Livers, nor Scandalous, nor seduceing Heretiks; And so not of the number of those from whom *Paul*, bids *Turn away*. And thus we have Answered the strongest of their Objections.

IV. *Use.* I. This Doctrine being thus cleared, ye ought not to look on what our Opposites hold in this Point as a matter of small moment, neither ought ye to suffer your selves to be deceived with the pretence of strictness with which they cover it. It is a Doctrine that hath fearful Consequences: For by this, the third part of the best Churches that ever were, shall be put in no better case than Pagans themselves, to live without all ordinances, their Children without Baptism: And this will hold off many who have true Grace; for how many are there (even of those) who cannot give convincing signs of Grace, either to themselves or others. By this Rule mens Consciences shall still be held in an Uncertainty, whether they may stay members of such a Church or not; because they can hardly be satisfied, whether all in it have convincing signs of Grace or not. Now the Judgment of our Opposits

is, that if the Rule be not keeped Conscientiously, Christians ought to Separate. By this Rule an insupportable Burthen is put on Christians, not only to examine themselves, but also the inward state of others: By this Rule, all the Churches that ever were in the dayes of the Prophets, Christs, Apostles, or in the Primitive Times, have been in the mist; all living and dying without the Visible Church, and so without Baptism, and so as Pagans. As also this shew of strictness beyond whatever God hath commanded, doth ever end in looseness, as appears by the *Separatists* present practise; for, what ever they speak against the looseness of other Churches, that we are but a mixture of Drunkards and loose prophane Livers; yet there is as great looseness in their own Churches as in any other, for they make no scruple to admit Hereticks, Covetous, Vain, Proud Boasters, almost of all sorts, if so be they agree with them in Principles against *Presbyterians*. This Rule puts men in an overweening conceit of themselves; others are nothing to them, all are unclean or at best but civil, natural, moral Men; but they are the Godly, Saints, and what not? Now that Doctrine which in its natural Consequence puts People to overvalue themseves and undervalue others, is certainly not *of God*. This rule of theirs makes way for infinite Janglings, and carrying on of self interests, under pretence of Holiness; for when the Rule is, That which every particular man thinks Signs of Grace, Such is the Corruption of the best, that it will not be applyed to all alike; To some they will be too strict, to others more lax, as af-

affection caries; Untill at last they think all good enough, who are for Their Way; And all others, but Natural, Worldly, and Carnal, who are not so. I may say that this hath been one of the most unhappy Doctrines that ever the Devil hatched; For it is that whereby Sathan hath carried on his design mainly these years by past; Many such Deceivers crying up strictness, whereby they have made themselves to be respected by some, and terrible to others, while under this pretence, they have born down Christ, Truth, and Holiness. I speak not this to countenance Looseness nor to give a dash to holy Strictness; It is our sin (and we are plagued for it) that we have not walked according to our Rule? Yet I love no further Strictness than what Christ Commands, Let us stretch out our Arms to invite sinners, to give Outward Obedience; and then when they are in, let us Hew them with the Word and Discipline: This was Christs way, And his Apostles way, as we have proved: So when *Separatists* say to you, That there are such sinful mixtures in your Churches, that an honest man is polluted to come among them; And so it is better to stay in your Chambers with a few of a gracious temper, and let the rest run to the Devil; Tell them, Christ and his Apostles made no such separation; And ye desire to be no stricter than They were: Only this is not to plead for our coming short of Christs Rule in our practise; That Scandals are too easily past; That so many Ignorants are admitted to the Lords Table, is our sin, and so not to be pleaded for. This for the *first* Head of *Separation.*

Head II.

No Separation from a True Church, or Gods worship in the Church, because of the sins of Fellow-worshipers.

WE are now to speak of the *Second Head*, Concerning *Separation* from true Churches, and the true worship of God in them, because of the sins of Fellow-worshipers.

I. That which our Adversaries hold concerning this is, That the presence of wicked men at Ordinances do defile the Ordinances to the Godly: Therefore, say they, where ever there is any corruption in a Church, or where prophane or wicked men are suffered to be in it, The Godly are bound to abstain from the Lords Table, and not to communicate with the mixed multitude; And because they hold it is not Lawful for any to live in any Church, where they cannot enjoy the whole Ordinances of God: Therefore they maintain that the Godly are bound to Separate from That Church, and to make up a Church of their Own, by gathering out

out so many of the Godly that are in it, as they can get, and make a little Congregation of their own, choosing any of them to be a Minister, and some one or two to be Elders, And so they set up a Church against a Church, a Church in the Bosome of a Church.

This is not a new Error, It troubled the Church of Christ long since, in the Fourth Century or somthing more than Three hundred years after Christ: The *Donatists*, a kind of Hereticks arose and troubled the Church for a long time, and did teach the same very thing; Against whom the Godly Fathers of the Church in that time did write: Yet because this Error was carried on with a shew of Holiness and Strictness more than ordinary, It took such deep rooting in the mindes of some well minding People (some of them at least) that it could not be driven out by force of Argument, till the Lord did leave the mantainers of this Error to fall into other vile abominations, for all their pretence of Strictness; Which made all others to loath them: And before it could be gotten rooted out of the minds of men, It troubled the Church almost 100. years together. The same is the Errour which we have now to Refute.

That ye may know what is the Doctrine of Our Church, that we are sworn to, And which is grounded on the Word, in this particular, Take it up thus; *First*, We hold that the Church should be reformed from all corruptions, And that wicked Scandalous men should be casten ont of the Church, at least debar-

red from the Lords Table: This we hold, and herein there is no difference betwixt Us and the *Separatists*: But the Question is, When the Church Officers do not their duty (as often it falls out) what through negligence, and what through other corruptions, and what through a base want of courage; so that sometimes the Rule is not put in practice; By which means all wicked men are not kept back from the Ordinance of the Lords Table; And some corruptions are tollerated: The Question (I say) is, what the Godly should do in that Case? And concerning this we hold, *First*, That in such a Case, it is lawful for a Godly Person to remove his dwelling, and go dwell in another Congregation, where he may have the Ordinances more purely Administrated; There is no tye laid on him, for binding him to remain constantly where he is, if he may conveniently remove. *Secondly*, We hold that if he cannot conveniently remove from that Congregation; he may remain a Member of it without sin, although he know there be several things which God is angry with in it, providing he keep his own hands clean of these. *Thirdly*, We hold that as long as the Godly man stayeth in that Congregation where there are abuses of that kind tollerated, he is bound according to his place to endeavour the remedy of them, he is bound, according to Christs Rule to admonish these who are Wicked and Scandalous; and if his admonition do no good, he is bound to delate them to the Eldership that they may be Censured: If they be Censured, It is well, he

hath

hath gained his point: But if they be not Censured, Or not so fully as he would, he is to regrate the matter to God and mourn for it. But *Fourthly*, We hold, that so long as he stayes in that Congregation, he is not bound to keep back from Gods Worship, As from the Lords Table, or from any part of service in it self lawful, because there are wicked men joyning with him in it: Far less is he to make a Rent in the Congregation or to draw away a number with him, to set up a little Church for themselves. And this is now the Question we are to debate about. The *Separatists* say, He is bound to keep back from the Communion; If any be admitted to it who is prophane or wicked; And that lest he be defiled with them. We say, if the Worship and service be lawful and pure in it self, He sins in keeping back from it, notwithstanding that others joyn with him in it, whom the Church Officers should keep back. We grant indeed, when the service is not pure and lawful in its self; As for example, when Communion cannot be had except the People Kneel, And so worship the Bread: In that case, every man is bound to keep back, that would keep himself free of sin; Not because there are wicked men going to the Table; But because the Ordinance is gone about in a sinful way. But our Question is Concerning Worship in it self lawful; That is to say, when a Communion is Administrated by a Minister Lawfully Called; When that *Table Gesture*, which Christ himself used, is keeped at it; When in all other things done according to his command;

What

What Godly Persons should do in that case, when Scandalous Persons one or moe are suffered to come to the Table: We hold, That notwithstanding of their being there, he is bound to come forward; And the wicked man's being there defiles only the Worship to himself, and not to those, who come in honesty. This much for the state of the Question.

II. Having cleared the Question, we come to Our Arguments for the Truth; viz. That the presence of wicked men does not defile the Worship of those that are Godly: And that the Godly should not keep back from lawful Commanded Duties, because wicked men have their hands at them.

Arg I. Our *First*, Argument is taken from the Church of the *Jews* in Christs time; Any who know the History of the Gospel, know that it was a very corrupt Church, in Christs time, in Doctrine and manners; Their Preachers the Scribes and Pharisees were debauched Persons; They perverted the Law, the blind led the blind: And when the Preachers were such, ye may judge what the People were; And yet we find that Christ and his Apostles did joyn with them in the lawful Worship, For *First*, Christ himself came yearly up to the Feast at *Jerusalem*. *Secondly*, He is so far from commanding his Apostles, and those who believed in him, to keep back from the Ordinary Worship, because of wicked men among them, That upon the contrair he forbids them to stumble at any thing of that kind; And commands them to come to the lawful Worship:

ſhip: as *Matth*: 23. 1. 2. *Then ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, Saying, The ſcribes &c.* Which is as if he had ſaid do not keep back from the lawful Worſhip, becauſe they are but Godleſs men that go about it; What they Preach according to the word, do that, and for Their wicked life follow them not in it.

Arg: II. Our *Second* Argument is taken from the Church in the Old Teſtament: We find, for the moſt part, many Corrupters and Graceleſs men that were Members of that Church; Both of the Preachers, and People; And yet we never find that the Godly did loath the Lawful Worſhip or keep back from it becauſe of that: Yea we find, The Lord commands them to joyn in the lawful Worſhip; And when they would *Separate*, He reproves them for it. We ſhall make this appear from *Three* or *Four* Times of the Church of the Old Teſtament. The *Firſt* is, *Moſes* Time; There was a great mixture of prophane men in the Church at that Time; As ye will find *Deut*: 32. (only remember this all along that the Point we are ſpeaking to, is not to plead for keeping prophane men in the Church; We ſhew thoſe ſhould be removed; But the Queſtion is, when they are keeped in, what the Godly ſhould do in that Caſe; If they ſhould turn back and leave that Church) I ſay we find, *Deut*: 32. the Church at that time, for the moſt part, was not very ſound, They corrupted themſelves, Their ſpots were not the ſpots of Children; yet we never read that *Moſes* and the Godly did withdraw from the Commanded Worſhip, be-

becauſe ſuch were at it; yea, on the contrair, we find them joyning with them, *Deut*: 29. *Moſes* enters into a Covenant with them, Preaches to them, Prayes for them: Yea *Deut*: 12. 6. 7. 8. The Lord commands the People to come up to the Publick Worſhip, in the place where he ſhould chooſe to place his name, and go about the lawful Commanded Duties: Tho (doubtles) there would be many wicked men among them. The *Second* Time of the Church in the Old Teſtament, which we take to prove the Point is, in *Joſhua's* time; there were then great mixtures of wicked men among them; As appears from *Joſhua* 24. 14. 23. He bids them put away the Strange Gods, So there were numbers of them corrupt in the way of Worſhip, and yet we find in the ſame Chapter v, 23. That *Joſhua* conveens them altogether to a Solemn piece of Worſhip, and enters into a Covenant with God, and Preaches to them on that Subject: Now ſurely *Joſhua* would not have done this, if ſo be the preſence of wicked men did defile the Worſhip to the Godly: And if it had been a ſin in the Godly to ſtay with the wicked when about Worſhip. The *Third Time* is in *Elijah's* time, 1 *Kings* 18. We find at that time there were ſome Godly, *Seven Thouſand* that had not bowed their Knee to *Baal*; We find alſo an Atheiſtical Multitude in *verſe* 29. The Body of the People Halting betwixt God and *Baal*; They would neither ſay that God was their God, nor that *Baal* was their God; and yet *Elijah* called All together to a ſolemn Worſhip, a ſolemn Sacrifice; That is gone about

about *verse* 36. And there was Preaching and Praying to that purpose. Now surely, If so be the presence of that Godless Multitude, which *Elijah* could not get reformed in a hast, had prophaned the Worship to the *seven thousand* Godly, *Elijah* would never have been accessory to that sin: A *Fourth* Time is from *Solomons* time to *Hezekiah*'s: There was great Corruption tollerated in the Church then; As Worshipping God in the High-places, as is clear through the whole Tract of the History of that time; And there was much Prophanity of Life in that time; which also appears from the frequent Sermons of the Prophets to that purpose; And yet we never read that the Prophets did separate from the lawful Worship, because of that mixture in the Church: Yea on the contrary we read they did joyn with them in every Lawful Duty, 2 *Chron.* 15. *Asa* gathers all together, and enters into a Covenant with them: *Isaias*, *Jeremiah*, and the rest Preaches to them, Prayes with them. Now if the presence of Wicked Men had pollured the Service to them, then *Isaias* his Preaching and Praying, and joyning with the People in Worship should have been defiled to Him. A *Fifth* Instance is taken from 1 *Samuel* 2. 16. *Eli*'s Sons the Priests were Prophane men: whereupon the Godly began to abhor the Worship; And so it is said in *verse* 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young Men was very great before the Lord, for Men abhorred the Offering of the Lord.* And to speak the Truth, It was little wonder they did so: For in *verse* 22. We find the Priests were so Godless that they did

ly

ly with Women that Assembled at the doors of the Tabernacle of the Congregation: Little wonder then that the Godly did loath and withdraw: But does the Lord approve of Their withdrawing, notwithstanding of that reason? No, We see in *verse* 24. Where *Eli* the Prophet speaks to his Sons, sayes he, *Nay my Sons: For it is no good report that I hear; ye make the Lords People to transgress*: Their abhoring the offering of the Lord because of wicked men that had their hands at it, is called *(a transgressing) ye make the Lords people to transgress.* From all which it is clear. That the presence of wicked men doth not defile the Worship to the Godly, providing they come honestly themselves: And that therefore the wickeds presence should not keep them away.

There is an Exception which our Opposits have against this Argument: And it is taken from the State of the Church in the Old Testament; They say, That to separate from the Church in the Old Testament was impossible, there being no other Church to joyn with; The Service was then annexed to the Temple; And so the Case of the Church under the Old Testament, was far different from the Case under the New. We might answer several things unto this: As *First*, If so be that the presence of wicked men doth defile the Worship to the Godly, then the Godly had been bound to withdraw from the Church, even under the Old Testament, although there had been no other Church to joyn with: Better to be out of the Church Visible than to be in it, if we must sin by abiding in it.

But

But to answer more briefly, we shall find Instances in the New Testament that make *Separation* unlawful, as well as in the Old, which Instances shall make up our *Third* Argument.

Arg. III. Our *Third* Argument. In the Church of *Corinth* there was a Prophane Multitude, 1 *Cor.* 3, 4. We find there were Schismaticks in it. *Chap.* v. *v.* 1. We find Incests were Tollerated, *Chap.* 6 *v.* 1. We find there were men of Contentious Spirits, going to Law before Infidels. Yea in that Chapter, We find there were some pleading the Lawfulness of *Fornication*; And *Chap.* 11. We find there were Drunkards among them; And such Drunkenness as was most abominable; For some came Drunk to the Lords Table, *v.* 21. And *Chap.* 15. We find there were some infected with a dangerous Heresy The denying of the Resurrection. And so a number of very offensive things were among them, But after all, the Apostle Tho he reproves them very sharply yet he no where sayes, Ye that are Godly stay away from joyning in Worship, because of such mens joyning; But on the contrair he approves their coming together to go about the Ordinances, Only reproving the wrong way they came in. So *Chap.* 11. *v.* 18. *First of all when ye come together in the Church I hear there be divisions among you.* And *v.* 20. *When you come together therefore unto one place,* &c. He doth not reprove their coming together, but suppones it as a thing Lawful, only he reproves them for their Divisions. So in the Church of *Galatia*, There was much corruption among them, they were *Bewitched* with

with Heretical Doctrine *O Fooliſh Galatians who hath Bewitched you*, &c. *Cap*, 3. *v*, 1, They had *begun in the Spirit but were like to end in the Fleſh*, v, 3. In the Church of *Epheſus* were many who had fallen away from their firſt Love, *Revel*, 2, 1. The Church of *Sardis*, *Revel*: 3, 1. Did Tollerate prophane perſons ſuch as defiled their Garments; And yet we never read the Spirit of God commanding to Separat from worſhip becauſe of them: Indeed he reproves them ſharply for their Corruption; For their falling away from their firſt love, For Their Tollerating Prophane wicked men; But he ſayes not All ye that are Godly turn your backs upon that Church; Make up a new Church of your Own; But directly approves their joyning together in what was right. So it is clear that *Separation* from the Ordinances is no more to be Tollerated under the New Teſtament than it was under the Old.

Arg: IV. Our *Fourth* Argument to prove the point is this: The Sins of wicked Men only defile the Worſhip to themſelves: Therefore, not to others. We ſhall find for this two places of Scripture: *Matth*. 22. In the Parable of the Gueſts coming into the Kings Supper, there is one that wants a Wedding Garmant *verſe* 12. The Maſter of the Feaſt finds him out, and ſayes, Friend, *How comeſt Thou hither*, *And he was found Speechleſs*. The Maſter of the Feaſt ſayes not All ye Gueſts are defiled becauſe this man ſits with you; As ſhould have been ſaid If his preſence had defiled the Worſhip to them: But only he reproves the Man himſelf; The

ſin

sin is thine, and thou shall bear the blame of it. The *Second* place is, 1 *Cor.* 11.29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*: He sayes not, He eateth and drinketh Damnation to all, but to himself. It would necessarily follow according to this Doctrine, that he did eat Judgment to all, If so be the presence of the wicked Man did defile the Ordinance, or make it sinful to the rest that Communicate with him: And therefore in the preceeeding words it is said, *Let a man examine himself*, &c. He sayes not when ye are coming to the Table, *Let every one of you examine your Neighbour*, Which would necessarily follow, If the presence of the Wicked Man did defile the Ordinance to the rest, but all he sayes is, *Let every one examine himself*, &c. It's true the permitting of a wicked person to come to the Communion is the sin of the Church Guides, but it is not the sin of Fellow Communicants, seeing he is admitted to Communicate with them: For He only defiles the Worship to Himself.

Arg. V. Our last Argument to prove this Point is, That from this Doctrine of our Opposits, it would follow; That the Dignity and Worth of Ordinances did depend on Instruments, or upon those that are partakers of the Ordinance, If so be that the sins of the Instruments, or of Fellow-Worshipers did defile the Worship: Now this is most absurd; The Dignity of Ordinances depends on him whose they are: The Word of God, however Preached, Is His Word; Its true we are ready to cast at the Word because of Instruments: But whoever he be

that Preaches, The Word is the Word of God, and worthy to be received: And so the Sacraments, Whoever they be that joyn with Me in them, lose not their worth and efficacy to Me, who am seeking Christ in them, though worthless men have their hand at them: And the reason is, I do not Communicate with them in what they do wrong, Let God and Them reckon for that; The root of my Communion is Christ; In so far as They lay hold on Christ, I Communicate with them; In so far as they do otherwise, I do not. The wicked man professes Communion with Christ, and Seals up an Outward Fellowship with the Visible Church: I Communicate with him in That: But in so far as he doth this Hypocritically, I do in as far separate from him. And this much for the Arguments Confirming the Truth, That the presence of Wicked men doth defile the Ordinances to none but to Themselves.

III. In the next place we come to bring to the touch-stone the Arguments they use against the Truth, we shall shortly propound the most plausible of them and take them off.

Obj: 1: The *First* Objection is grounded on the 2*Cor.* 6 17. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate &c.* This is the stoutest of their Arguments: The Lord commands the *Corinthians* to come from among them and Separate; And therefore (say they) when there are wicked men coming together with the Godly, the Godly ought to separate from them. But to shew you the vanity of the Argument we

shall

shall Answer it by reading out the rest of the *verse*; For it is clear what the Apostle aims at----*Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing* &c. He bids them only Separate from Sinful Actions, and not from Lawful Duties. That ye may see yet further the vanity of this Reason, Know, It was the custom in the Church of *Corinth* 1 *Cor.* 10. When Idolaters would invite some of their Christian neighbours, they would go with them, and eat with them at their Idol Feasts, and they thought they might lawfully do it, because they knew their Idols were not true Gods, and so by their eating they intended no worship to the Idol, as these Idolaters did who did eat with them, but did it only to satisfy their hunger and keep up common Friendship: Now *Paul* discharges them from this kind of Communion, and this is it he points at here, *Be separate*, Do not meddle with their Idol Feasts because it was indeed Communion with them in their Idolatry: And so it doth not follow, because *Paul* bids the *Corinthians* be separate from Heathens, in doing a thing sinful, That therefore he forbids Christians to joyn in a lawful Worship with the Church of Christ.

Obj. II. Their *Second* Objection is taken from *Rev.* 18, 4. *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my People, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.* But this place is pitifully misapplyed to the purpose; For its evident that the Apostle *John* is there speaking of whoorish *Rome*, and is commanding all Gods People to Separate from the Antichristian Church; Now let any judge

it that be not looſe Reaſoning, We are commanded to Separate from Rome, who hath overturned the foundation of Religion, Worſhips the Creature inſtead of the Creator, therefore we are to Separate from Chriſts true and Pureſt Churches and Gods Worſhip in them, If ſo be prophane men be keeped in them: It is a ſenſeleſs Conſequence.

*Obj.*III. Their *Third* Objection againſt the Truth is taken from 1 *Cor*:5.11. *But now I have written unto you not to keep company*&c. Say they, We are forbidden to eat our ordinary meat with wicked men, and far more we are forbidden to eat at the Lords Table with them. To this we Anſwer, That indeed it is the ſhame of Chriſtian Churches, and our ſin, that Scandalous and Ignorant Perſons are admitted to the Lords Table; But when they are admitted partly through the neglect of Miniſters, and partly through abounding corruptions, It doth not follow that every private Chriſtian is to caſt himſelf out of the Church, becauſe wicked men are admitted. As to this place here ſpoken of, Its true every tender Chriſtian is forbidden to uſe Familiar Society with Fornicators, But it is not ſimply forbidden, as if it were unlawful at all times to eat with them; For even *Paul* himſelf eats with Heathens *Act*:27.35. So the thing here forbidden is, That the Lords People ſhould not uſe intimat Society with wicked men; yet ſo as when they cannot get it eſchewed, It is lawful both to eat and drink with them; As put the caſe we could not get it otherwiſe, it were lawful for us to eat with them following *Pauls* practice:

And

And so it follows in the matter of the Lords Table. If it be in Ministers power to hold them back, if they do it, it is well; If not, it doth not follow, that private Christians who have no power to debarr them, and so cannot get eating with them eschewed, without neglecting of a duty, are bound to *Separate.*

Obj. IV. Their *Fourth* Objection is from 1*Cor:*5.6-- *Know ye not that a litle leaven leaveneth the whole lump?* Scandalous men infect the Church; And the Church being infected, infects the Worship; and so if I come to the Worship it is infected to me, and I do sin. Now this is a Consequence far from *Pauls* words, a litle *leaven,* sayes he, *leaveneth* &c. Therefore cast out the Incestous man. But he doth not say, If he be not put out; cast out your selves. As for that they say that prophane men infect the Worship, It is without ground: Its true prophane men oftimes infect these among whom they live; But they do not infect the worship: For the way that prophane men infect these among whom they live, is not Physical, As the Pest infects every thing it toucheth; but they infect by their evil example: And so a prophane man may infect another man, but by his evil example cannot infect the Worship, because the Worship is not carried away with evil example, as a man is: And so if I can keep my self from following their example, the worship is pure and clean to me.

Obj. V. Their last Objection is (say they My coming to the Table with them is a countenancing of them

in their profanation of the holy things: So I partake with them in their sins, & say *Amen* to what they do: And therefore better for me to withdraw. We Answer, this is a plausible Argument to deter People that are tender, but when tryed, it will be found weak; For if so be this Argument do hold for Separating from the Lords Table, it will conclude also that we should not hear Preaching with them, for our hearing Preaching with them is a countenancing of them, as well as our coming to the Sacrament with them; And the wicked man profaneth the holy things in the one, as well as in the other? And by this it should follow that Jesus Christ should have been polluted; which were Blasphemy to speak, by His Preaching to Prophane multitudes; For in That He countenanced them. Therefore *Secondly*, For a more full Answer we say, Worshipping with them is not a consenting to their sin, except it were in our power to hold them out, but not otherwise; Thou doest say *Amen* to what they do profess, that They are serving God, doing the commanded Duty; But not to Their Hypocritical Way in doing of It: Did Christ say *Amen* to the Pharisees way of Hearing although He Preached to Them: So neither doest thou: But as is already said Thou approves of Them in so far as They do the Commanded Duty; But that it is done Impenitently, Thou by Thy joyning in the Worship approves it not. This for their Objections.

IV. For *Use*, Our first is this: To regrate that there is so much occasion given to this Error in the Churches

Churches of Christ, We may regrate that there are so many of the Members of the Church Prophane and Wicked; And that People walk not like Their Holy Calling; We may regrate that the Officers of the Church, Ministers, and Elders, do not Purge out Scandalous Persons, Do not Labour to find Them and Censure Them, and debarr Them from Communions; But most of all it is to be regrated, That many of those, who should Purge out others, Their Life is such that They deserve to be Purged out as Scandalous Themselves: For this cause it is that the Lord threatens to Rent the Church; And if He should let men arise among our selves, under pretence of Pious strictness, to cast at Our Worship, We behoved to say, Just is the Lord: Although on the other hand it is no excuse, but a fearful sin to Them, who by Their carriage Rent and undoe the Church, because of some Corruptions that are in it.

Use II. The Second Use is, That ye would not think all alike Guilty that may encline to this Error of Separating from Lawful Worship, because of wicked Men's being admitted to it. It's true there may be some Piously strict, that upon the one hand, loath at that which is Good, when they cannot get it but in wicked Mens company, And upon the other hand, because they cannot live without the Ordinances, therefore They encline to make up a Litle Church of Good Men of Their Own choise: By which means the Devil takes advantage of Their zeal to make them dishonour God by runing to the other extreme: Now although the Humour of such

should not be given way to, yet those who enclime this way from a desire of strictness are much to be Pitied. But on the other hand, we are not to think so of the Ring-leaders of this Error; It hath been found by experience that such have been more carried on by a conceit of their Own Holiness, than any true Love to Holiness it self; It hath been usually found in Heady men, who had a mind to make a Rupture in the Church, that this has been the Method they used to walke in, To cry up Holiness in themselves, and to cry down all who differed from them, as untender: That so they might carry all with them at last; At least to Rent and divide the Church: To such we will say nothing, but Christs Curse, and the Churches for Renting her bowels, will fall on Them.

But unto the other we will speak something, that is, To those who are piously Strict and really loath at the good Service of God, because such Persons are at it who should not be there. To those I shall say; *First*, Know what is your Duty. And *Secondly*, What is not your Duty in reference to Prophane Men; Oft-times we mistake our Duty and leap over it, to what is not our Duty: Now your Duty in reference to prophane Men, Is not to take your hands from the Ordinance, because Their hands are at it; To turn your backs on your Duty because Prophane Men join with you in it; It will be but a small excuse to pretend when God reckons with you, when the Lord will say, What made you neglect such a Duty? to say, Lord I grant it was my Duty, but I could not, because such Men were at it: Therefore ye should know

your

your Duty in reference to those, and it is this, In the place where ye live, when ye see a fault committed, ye should tell the guilty persons of it; If the Fault be open, and a Fault ye can get proven, ye ought to delate it to those who have power to Censure them, If so be they may be gained by this mean; Or if not, ye have done your Duty: Or if the Church do their Duty in casting out the Obstinate, then ye have your intent: But if so be that notwithstanding ye have done your Duty, yet the Church do not Theirs, in purging the House of God: In this case, ye are to regrate the matter to God, to mourn for it, ye are to testify that ye do not approve their way, and in so doing ye have done your Duty, and may have peace: For the presence of the wicked Man makes not the work sinful in it self to you, *He eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, And not to you; His presence doth not make the Worship sinful to thee; And so it looses thee not from thy obligation to join in the Worship: For if that were true, That the presence of wicked Men did defile the Worship to Thee, then Christians would be in a very hard condition: For there was never a Church so pure, but there were some admitted to it, whom a Man truly tender would think should not be there; There was never a Church so pure but a tender Man zealously strict would find some to challenge; And so according to that Doctrine there should be no Church that a tender Christian could joyn with; And so he should be forced to serve God apart and by himself alone: And this hath been the *Separatists* way, They have Separated

rated from one Church to another, till at last they could get none to join with; And so turned *Seekers*, that is, A *Sect* who think there are None they can join with; And therefore, they cast off all Publick Duties, and serve God by themselves alone; Because they can see none so Holy as themselves. And therefore ye would suspect Zeal when joyned with Error; And fear Error most when it is covered over with Zeal: For Error is never so dangerous, as when it gets on the mask of Zeal, It being then most cruel and most impudent: People then have no will to medle with it, lest they should seem to be Enemies to True Piety; And therefore because it is suffered and born with, it turns impudent until it undo all.

I only give One word to guard this, and so I shall end. There is not one Error that we refute, but if not guarded, Prophane Men may abuse it, and so may they This, to cast at those who are piously strict, though in an orderly way: And therefore, We say it is every Christians Duty to walk tenderly, and to be so strict towards others, as God requires of him. The thing we have Refuted as an Error is only this, *That because a Man cannot get all Duties gone about by All, so strictly as God commands; That therefore he will Separate from altogether*: But withal we did show, That not only a Man should be strict on himself (where right strictness will alwayes begin) but also do what in him lyes, according to his Duty and Calling, That the Ordinances of God may be keeped pure by others.

FINIS.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

SYNOD

AT

GLASGOW.

APRIL, 5th. 1653.

The first SERMON.

1 Corinth. 1. 10. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our* Lord *Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no* Divisions *among you: but that ye be perfectly join'd together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgement.*

THIS Text begins a new Purpose, so it is not necessary to speak much for clearing of the Dependance and Cohesion: Only ye would know somewhat of the State of this Church at

at the time when this Epistle was written, which will help us not a little to take up the Occasion and Scope of the Words read. *Paul* having planted a Church at *Corinth*, was after driven from thence by the fury of the Jews, as appears from *Acts* 18. 12. In whose absence, partly through the malice of Satan, partly through the subtilty of false Apostles, the Church was rent in Factions; some taking part with one Pastor and some with another, according to the diverse estimation they held them in, for their Humane Eloquence, great Knowledge, and other parts. The Church being thus rent, the Apostle addresseth himself timously to the Cure of this so Great an Evil: But because he was almost out of request with the most part of that People; tho as he himself, *Chap.* 4. *v.* 15. declares, he had *begotten them in Christ Jesus through the Gospel*; Therefore as a skill'd Physician being to administer a bitter Potion, he suggereth the brim of the Cup, by shewing, That whatever was Their respect to him, yet his Affection did remain the same towards them; And this he insisteth on from the beginning to the *tenth Verse*, wherein he falls upon the Sore he intends to Cure, to wit, Their Factions and Schism's, Obtesting them gravly in the Name of Jesus Christ, That they would set about the Healing of these woeful Rents, before they should turn to worse.

In the Words there are two things, 1. A Duty to which they are exhorted. 2. Some Arguments moving them to set about this Duty. The Duty is last in order of the Words, and propounded in three

Sen-

Sentences: 1. *That ye all speak the same thing.* 2. *That there be no Divisions among you.* 3. *That ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgement.* The Duty pressed in all these may be taken up in *two.* 1. An Evil they were to Eschew. 2. A Good which they were to Follow. The Evil to be Eschewed is in the second Sentence, to wit, *That there be no Divisions* or (as it is in the Original) *Schism's among you.* I shall not enter to speak of the nature of *Schism*, or how it differeth from *Heresy*; It is sufficient for the opening up of the Text, to know what Divisions or Schisms the Apostle meaneth by here: And that is know'n from the following *Verse*, to wit, Their Factious sidings in extolling One Minister, and debasing Another, with many fruitless Janglings and other bad consequences following thereupon, whereof doubtless this was One, The engaging of the Ministers themselves in Parties for upholding their Dependants, So *Verse* 12. *-----Every one of you saith* I *am of Paul, and* I *of Apollos, and* I *of Cephas----* One saith *Paul* is best, let us follow him: Another sayeth, Nay, but *Apollos* is best, we'll follow him: A third saith, *Cephas* is better than them both, I'le follow none of them: Now away with these fruitless Contests saith he.

In the next place, There is the Good to be Followed, and that is threefold, in opposition to three sorts of Evils which usually accompany *Schism* in a Church.

The first Evil accompanying *Schism*, is, Flat Contradiction, first among Ministers, and next among People;

People; when not only their Opinions do differ, but they are so hot upon the Business, that at all occasions they proclaim their Differences. In opposition to this, he exhorts them *To speak the same thing*, that is, They would beware of Contradictions in a matter of so small importance; Wherein they agreed, they would speak to that; Wherein they differ'd, they would forbear others, spending their time and parts upon more edifying purpose.

The second Evil accompanying *Schism* in a Church, is, Renting of Affections, When the Members of one Body turn cold-rife one towards another and their Affection dyeth: In opposition to this Evil he exhorts them to be *Joined together in the same Mind*, or the same Affection. It's true, the Word here rendred *Mind*, is used indifferently for the whole Faculties of the Soul, as the Understanding, Will, and Affections; But the Understanding being spoken to under the Word *Judgement*, which followeth; We think with some of the best Interpreters, That by the *Mind* here is meaned the *Affections*: So the thing he presseth in the second Place, is, That not only they would forbear others in the matter of their Publick Expressions, but also would labour to blow at the Coal of their almost dying Affections

The third Evil accompanying a *Schism*, is, Difference of Judgement; And in opposition to this, he exhorts them to be *Perfectly joined in the same Judgement*. The meaning is, They would labour to remove the Root of the Difference by coming to One *Judgement*: Not as if the Apostle had been careless what Judgement they

they had been of, providing they had been One; No, the one part of every Contradiction is Truth, and there is no Truth which the Apostle would have denied for Peace.

This for the Duty pressed: Next there are some Arguments perswading to this Duty. As 1. There is the Apostles Insinuation, partly in his Affectionate Exhortation, *I beseech you*, partly in his lovely Compellation, *Brethren.* 2. There is his Grave Obtestation--- *By the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*--- That is to say, as the Name of Christ is dear to you, which ye profess so much respect unto, so set about the Cure of these Factions and Fractious Sidings and Schisms, by which His Name suffereth so much. There is a third Argument to enforce this Duty, in the words *perfectly joined*, whereby the Apostle hints at the great Evil the Church was under by the present *Schism*, and the great good they should attain to by the removal of it. The word in the Original is borrowed from the Office of Chirurgeons, and that part of it which consists in the mending of broken Bones, and setting in joynt of Dislocated Members: So it imports 1. That through occasion of the Schism they were put all out of joynt: All the Members of the Church were Dislocated, and therefore unfit, so long as they remained in that case, for doing of any good Office to the Body. 2. It imports, that their following of his Advice for removing of the Schism, would set every Member of the Body in it's own place, and so enable the Body for going about actions profitable unto it self, which now (the whole Members being out of joynt) it could not do. This

This much for opening up the meaning of the Words. Divers points of Truth, arising from the several branches of the Text, might here be handled; but I intend to insist upon One arising from the scope which will comprehended the most part of the rest; It is this, *Unity in the Church, is a thing much to be laboured for and sought after; and Division and Schism in a Church, is much to be eschewed.*

In prosecuting this Doctrine I shall first distinguish *Union*, That we may know what *Union* is meaned. 2. I shall confirm the point. 1. By Scripture. 2. By Reason, 3. I shall apply the Doctrine for our *Use*.

First then, To know what *Union* the Text and Doctrine speaks of: It's fit you know, That there are several sorts of *Union*. 1. There is an Union of the Church Invisible, the tye and bond whereof is Inward Graces: All the Members of the Church Invisible are United to Christ the Head by Faith, and one to another by Love. This is not the Union here meaned, The Text speaks of a Visible Union of the Church Visible, In Opposition to a Visible Rent and Schism.

Secondly, There is an Union of the Church Visible, and of it's Members among themselves. This again is twofold; The first is That *Union*, which is necessary to the Being of a Church, and the Being of a Member: So that a Church cannot be a Church, nor a Man a Member of the Visible Church without it: Wherein this *Union* consists, is Controverted betwixt Us and the *Independants*. But the Doctrine meaneth not of This *Union* either; So we insist not

on

on it. The *Union* prefled in the Text, is fuch, that the Church at *Corinth* for the time did want, and yet remained a Church. The *Union* therefore here meaned is, A fecond fort of *Union* belonging to the Vifible Church: To wit, That which is neceffary to the Well-being of a Church; without the which tho a Church remain a Church, yet fhe loffeth much of her outward Beauty, her Authority is much weakned, her great work, which is the edification of her felf in Love (*Eph.* 4. 13.) is much retarded: She remains a Church, but not fuch a Church as is defcribed, *Cant.* 6. 10. *Who is fhe that looketh forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners?* A divided Church is not fuch a Church.

But for further underftanding of the *Union* here prefled, ye would know that this *Union* which is neceffary to the Well-being of a Church is *Threefold.* 1. There is an *Union* in Judgement, when there is no conficderable Difference among the Members of the Church, in the matter of Opinion; When all *Think the fame thing.* And this is here prefled, *Be perfectly joined in one Judgement.* 2. There is an *Union* in Heart and Affections fpoken of *Act.* 4. 32. *The multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul.* And this *Union* is alfo here prefled, --*Be perfectly join'd together in the fame Mind*, or in Love and Affection, as we fhew'd in the opening up of the Words. 3. There is an *Union* in Practice, and that is, when whatever Difference there is in Judgement, yet it's not openly proclaim'd: Publick Contradictions and Eriftick De-

bates are eschewed, and an unanimous joint practice in these things, wherein there is Agreement, is followed. And this *Union* is also pressed in the Text, *I beseech you---that ye all speak the same thing.* So it's clear the Text means all these *three* sorts of *Union*, the Doctrine intends them All, and as might be made evident, other Scriptures press them All. Only this, we would know, the Order wherein they are pressed, to wit, So as every Breach in the Former, is not to make a Breach in the Latter; Every Difference in Judgement, is not to make a Rent in Heart or Affection; Nor, tho a Rent be in both, doth it infer necessarily a Divided Practice, at least in these things wherein there is Agreement: And for that, the Scripture is clear, especially *Philipp.* 3. 15, 16 where *v.* 15 the Apostle supposeth difference of Judgement among the *Philippians*, as to the point he is there speaking of, and subjoineth for matter of Practice, *v.* 16. *Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule.* That is to say, Tho we cannot agree in all things, yet let us eschew the proclaiming of Our Differences, by Our contrary Practices.

This much for the first thing, to wit, What *Union* the Doctrine presseth. It is an *Union* necessary to the Well-being of the Visible Church, particularly, an Union in *Judgement*, an Union in *Affection*, an Union in *Practice*: An Union all these wayes is to be sought for and laboured after, yet so as, if we cannot attain to Union in the Former, we are yet still to endeavour it in the Latter.

For Confirmation of this Truth we might cite seve-

several Scriptures. 1. These wherein this Union is promised to the Church, and that as a rich Covenant Blessing, such as *Jer.* 32. 39. ---*I will give them one Heart, and one way that they may fear Me for ever*--- The like is in *Ezek.* 37. 22. 2. These Scriptures wherein this *Union* is highly commended: Especially *Ps.* 133. 1. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*---- and so through the whole. 3. These Scriptures which hold out the Mediator's Prayer to the Father for this Union; *Joh.* 17. 21. *That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us*---- and so *v.* 23. 4. Those Scriptures where this Union is expressly enjoyned and pressed whereof there are many; Such as *Philipp.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *If there be*---- *any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies; Fulfil ye My Joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind.* And 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. *Finally Brethren, farewel*---- *be of one mind, live in peace*----. And lastly, these Scriptures where Division contrary to Unity is condemned; as *Rom.* 16. 17. ---*I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, and avoid them.*

But for further Confirmation of this Truth, we shall in the next place, bring forward some Reasons, concluding the equity and necessity, of seeking after, and entertaining of Unity in the Church, which shall also serve as motives to the Duty.

Reason 1. Union furthers Edification: So *Eph.* 4. 3. Union is pressed; And One Fruit among many to

be reaped hereby, is (*v.* 12.) *the edifying of the Body of Christ.* And as Unity furthers Edification, so Division marreth it; Divisions in a Church, tho about small things, yet if stiffly mantain'd, prove a great stumbling Block to the Weak; theyare put to doubt all Truths, because Men gracious and learned doubt of some: So Division not only marreth progress in the building, but striketh at the very foundation of what is already built.

Reas. 2. Divisions in a Church make the Ministers contemptible: Of all Men Ministers suffer most this way, because usually they are most active in beginning and upholding the Division; and usually even these who have Truth for them, suffer much (if not most) this way: *Paul*, tho an Apostle, and a Man for Truth, yet he lost much of the former esteem he had amongst the *Corinthians*, though once they would have pluck'd out their Eyes for him, yet through the Division, their Distemper grew to such an hight, that he was look'd on as *Contemptible---- rude in speech----* yea *A Fool*, and what not? as appears from 2 *Cor:* 10. 10. *Ch.* 11. 6, 16.

Reas. 3. The Essential Unity of the Church, and the many things wherein a Church agreeth that way, should enforce this Union. The Apostle *Paul*, *Eph.* 4. draweth a strong Argument for Unity and Peace in the Church, from this Ground. The Duty is propounded *v.* 3. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* And *v.* 4,5,6. it is pressed by this Argument, *There is on Body, and one Spirit,---- One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; One God and Father*

of

of all---- Here are many *Ones* together in two or three lines, as if he had said, What a shame is it for you who are so many wayes *One*, to rent in pieces for a thing of so small moment.

Reas. 4. Divisions in a Church turn away every Man's Eye from his main Task; I mean from the joint opposing of Satan's main Design, to be wrangling one with another: It's Satans Policy when he intends to bear down Truth in a Church, to set those who should oppose him most, by the Ears about smaller things, that so he may carry his point with less difficulty; herein making use of *Machiavils* (or rather his own) Principle *divide & impera*, Divide and Carry. It's often seen that the nearer those who differ come to one another, they drive on their point against others with the greater Animosity and Eagerness; the Jews and Samaritans were at greater variance than Jews and Heathens: And the Reason is this, The less the Difference is, they have the more hopes to bring others to their mind, hence their mutual On-setts are more furious, and their Disappointments the more bitter, the higher they were in their hopes; and in the mean time while they mind nothing so much as to bear down one another, Satan cometh good speed in bearing down of Truth and Them and All.

Reas. 5. Union when once lost in a Church, is hardly ever again attained: We read *Act.* 15. 39. that *Paul* and *Barnabas* parted, but we hear nothing of their meeting again. And Church History sheweth us, "That Schisms in a Church for almost just no-

" thing have continued incureable for some Genera-
" tions, until not only the Authors and Ring-leaders
" of the Schism, but also their Disciples were remo
" ved by Death. *Ostand. Cent.* 4.

Reas. 6 When a Rent is made in a Church, as it is hardly curable, so it still groweth wider: It is easier to know whereabout a Rent begins, than where at it will end. The greatest of Church Divisions (some of them at least) have been observed to have had but small Beginnings, hence is that commonly received Maxim *Omne Schisma definit in hæresin.* The Faction of the Donatists at first made but a Schism separating from the Communion of the Church, upon pretence of some faulty Officers and mixed Communions, but it was not long until they fell into several Heresies.

The Doctrine being thus Explained and Confirmed, from Scripture and Reason, I shall now apply it to *Use.* Our first *Use* is for Refutation. The Doctrine refutes, at least layeth a just *odium* upon, the Doctrine of *Separation*, and that Way which is called *Independant* or *Congregational*, in so far as it is made up of such Principles, as lay a Foundation for the perpetual Renting of the Church: Of which Principles I shall reckon *Four*.

The *First* is, That Principle, whereby They maintain the Lawfulness of gathering Churches, out of Churches, acknowledged by themselves to be True Churches. A most dividing Principle, in so far as it gives way for every Man to Separate from his Own, and to join himself with another Church sup-

supposed Purer, with contempt of the former Congregation. To gather Churches out of Churches, is the way to destroy, but not to heal diseased Churches; It is to destroy many Churches for making up of One, as if one going about the Cure of a Natural Body should cut off and take out all the sound Members, and leave the rotten and diseased Members, either to Cure one another or to perish. A strange and desperate way of Cure.

A *Second* Dividing Principle in that Way, is, The Rule according to which they will have Ecclesiastick Judgement pass'd upon their Church Members, to wit, Conviction of their Inward good Estate, which Rule being variable and uncertain, some will judge one way, some another, according as they are more or less enclined to Charity; yea the same Man at several times, will have a various Judgement of the Inward State of another, according as the Presumptions and Probabilities, (by which only he is led to judge of what is within,) are more fully or sparingly represented: Hence there is a Seed of Breach upon Breach: But God hath not left his Church in the matter of Authoritative judging to walk by such uncertain Rules.

A *Third* Dividing Principle in the *Independant* Way is this, That all Church Power is solely in a Particular Congregation. Hence if a Particular Congregation go wrong, tho but made up of seven Persons (which is a competent number with them) there is no Authoritative Mean in all the Churches of the World to reclaim them. This must needs open a

Door to as many Divisions as there are Churches.

A *Fourth* Dividing Principle is, That there is not a Catholick Visible Church, yea no Church Visible, but a Particular Congregation; and another Principle they hold which followeth upon this, to wit, That a Minister can exerce no Acts as a Minister, to any but those of his own Flock. Hence 1. There can be no Communion of Churches as Churches, there remaineth only a Communion of Members: There can be no Church Act from one Church, or many towards another. The Results and Determinations of the most Famous Synods, made up of never so many Churches, are to be look'd upon but as the Actings of so many private Christians. Yea, 2. Hence it will follow that there can be no Communion amongst Members of several Congregations, in publick Church Ordinances, as in hearing the Word jointly from a sent Minister, in Receiving the Seals together; For according to this Principle a Minister cannot Authoritatively Preach, nor in any respect Administer Baptism or the Lords Supper unto any, though never so Gracious, except to those of his own Flock; no not tho they be occasionally present when he is dispensing these Ordinances unto his Own: Which Consequence is expresly granted by some of the chief of that Perswasion. So it is a Principle which destroyeth all Communion of Churches and Members; and therefore inconsistent with Union.

Several such like Principles in That Way might be reckoned out, Concerning which the Doctrine warrandeth us to say this much; If Unity be so necessary

ceſſary, and ſo much to be ſought after, then ſuch Dividing Principles cannot be of God.

Our *Second Uſe* is for Direction: If Unity be ſo neceſſary, and ſo much to be laboured for, then we are to bewail that we our ſelves are ſo far, and every day a ſtep further from it: Our Diviſions grow I fear all the *three* wayes, and in all ranks; Our Heads are divided, our Tongues divided, yea and our Hearts divided, Synods are divided, Presbyteries are divided, Congregations divided: Miniſters divided, People divided; yea, and in ſome places Families divided: Husband and Wife, Father and Son, Mother and Daughter, Maſter and Servant, yea and all divided. We are as Mad-men, every one eating *the fleſh of his own Arm. Manaſſeh, Ephraim; and Ephraim Manaſſeh: And they together againſt Judah*---- An Evil never enough lamented, and the more to be lamented that there is no appearance how it ſhall be helped. There are many things may make us look upon the preſent Diviſion as our ſaddeſt Affliction and greateſt Weight: I ſhall reckon *Six* things.

1. The many particular Evils which upon an exact ſearch, it will be found Our Diviſions have brought upon Peoples own Spirits. How much of our precious time is ſpent in vain jangling, by which our Heart cannot but be made worſe? Many, I fear too too many ſo taken up with their Heads that they forget their Hearts; the ſweetneſs and profit of mutual converſe and fellowſhip is much marred; Our mutual freedom and benefit that way much impaired: Our

Our Peace with God by our hot Debates, untender Expressions, and bitter and unnecessary Reflections oftimes brangled and shaken.

A *Second* Thing that may make Us look on our Present Divisions as our great Weight, is, The name of Praise which this Church hath had for *Unity* in times by-past amongst the Reformed Churches. In the Harmony of Confessions, the Preface to the Confession of Faith of the Church of *Scotland*, makes mention of this as a rare Priviledge of This Church beyond many, and that which makes Her very Name Famous among Churches abroad, That for the space almost of Sixty Years She had keep'd Unity with Purity without either Schism or Heresy. Now if Unity hath been formerly this Church's Praise, how sad and weighty is it, and how woeful men are we, that this Breach should be under our Hand?

A *Third* Thing to make our present Division weighty is, That it is the greatest Weight which Gods People up and down the Land lyeth under, it's a Weight beyond all other Weights and Sufferings: And if it be their Weight, it ought for many Reasons to be much more ours.

Fourthly, Our Divisions, and Courses taken for carrying them on, hath given a deeper Inward Wound, to the Government of Christ's House than all the Outward Power of the World could have done. The leading of us by pairs to a Stake for our adhering to the Government and Constitution of our Mother Church, our Imprisonment, Banishment, the laying of Congregations desolate for that Cause, could

could not have ſhaken the minds of many, in relation to theſe Truths, ſo much as our own Diviſions and Practices following thereupon have done. An Inward Diſeaſe is more dangerous, and weakeneth more than Outward Blows.

Fifthly, Our Diviſion may and ought to be the more weighty, the more of Judgement is in it: And certainly there is much of Wrath and Judgement in it. It is a judicial ſtroak; For all ſee it's Evil, the moſt part are weary of it, and yet cannot fall upon the right way for putting an end to it: Yea, no courſe hitherto eſſayed for Union, but it hath proved an hightning of our Diviſion; And ſo it will until it come to that hight which God in His juſt Judgement will have it at; However it's clear that Wrath is in it, much of Judgement is in it, and that ſhould make it weighty: We ſide one againſt another, and God is ſiding againſt us both.

Sixthly, This ſhould make our Diviſion have a particular Weight with us in this Synod, That we drink moſt of its bitter Fruits: We are the Stage whereon this cruel Dividing Spirit acts its Game moſt: None in time paſt ſo United as We, but none now ſo Divided; And even this may give us ſad thoughts of our Acceſſion to the beginning and Fomenting of this woeful Rent.

Our *Third Uſe* is of Direction alſo following upon the former, If *Union* be ſuch a good; if Diviſion ſuch an evil; And if our Diviſions be ſo much to be bewailed; Then we ought to have ſome thoughts towards the making up of our breach; there

there ought to be some guardings against these evils which may follow upon it, until it be made up.

The Prosecuting of this Use, as it is the most part of our Work, so it is the most difficult; and I fear also, considering our present Distempers, and deep Engagements lying on every one almost to his Own Way, that for the time it shall be but Fruitless: Yet being led to it by the word of Truth, and not knowing when the Lord may make it have it's own Fruits, whether now or afterwards, I shall with the Lords help adventure on it. And therefore in pressing this Use, I shall speak to *three* things. 1: I shall show what things I conceive as necessary to be eyed by us while we aim at *Union*, if so we would have Our aim's effectual. 2. Because a Compleat *Union* is not soon to be expected, I shall give some Directions for the Management of Our Differences, so as the Church of Christ may have the less hurt by them at least. *Lastly*, I shall propound some Considerations to People, for preventing of stumbling, and making Shipwrack upon our Divisions.

As to the *First*, I shall mention *Six* things we should carry alongs with us while we aim at *Union*. Unto all which I premit One General, as tending to give Life to all the rest, without which all our Endeavours for *Union*, though otherwise never so regular, though guided with never so much Prudence, though prosecuted with never so much zeal, will prove ineffectual; and it's this: That both Ministers and People should be more in seeking after God's Face: So long as we remain at a distance from

from him, no wonder we grope as Blind-men in the dark, and cannot come nigh one to another: It's granted by all, That *Jesus Christ* hath much withdrawn from the Spirits of his People: There is not so much of Life conveyed by Preaching, not such access granted in Prayer; no such delight in Means; no such joy in his presence; This is granted by all and in a manner regrated by all, but lamented by few; And fewer yet make it their work to have the Lord returning and shewing himself as sometimes he hath done: And until this be, we can look for the less success of any attempts made for the removal of this our sore stroak: But if God would return, It were then easy work: One glimpse of him, filling the House with his Glory, would scatter the Clouds of mutual Jealousies, make us, as men ashamed, steal from all our Dividing Principles; would put to silence all our turbulent Distempers; and make us blush at our proud and selfish Animosities: O! for more of God, then would all be well. But I come to the particulars to be eyed by us while we aim at *Union*.

First, It is not to be expected that Our *Union* will begin at our Uniting in Judgment, In that Question about which our unhappy Differences began. It was the Judgment of some from the beginning, that the standing at a distance in other things, until we should be united in That, should put Us at a further distance, even in That. Our *Union* in *Practice* first, will be the shortest cut to bring us unto *Union* of Judgement about that Question, if ever we shall come

come to it at all. Hence publick Debatings before the People, and such as tend to make others odious who are not of our Way, is not the way for *Union*. Such work irritateth, but convinceth not. It's true no Truth may be quit for *Union*, No, not the least, *Quisquilia veritatis pretiosissima*, *The very refuse of Truth is most precious*: Yet that the positive asserting of some Truths may be forborn for Peace's sake, I believe is granted by All, and there is good reason for it: Only there is one exception here necessary, *to wit*, when Truth is impugned, then there is a necessity to speak for it, at least till there be such a Testimony given to that Opposed Truth, as may be rested upon. And in this Case some may be made unwillingly to speak, as the Apostle *Paul* was once in defence of his own Estimation, 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. *I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you*:— As if he should say, God knows, I have no more delight to speak of this subject, than ye have to hear me, but your Indiscretion forceth me to it.

A *Second* thing to be carried along with us, while we aim at Union, is, no union of this kind of which the Doctrine speaks, can be expected in the Church, except there be an *Union* in one Supreme Representative; and that such an one whose Authority we may stand under for the present. As it is in the Civil State, so is it in the Church as to this purpose, No *Union* can be there, as of one actually incorporate Body, except it be under one and the same Supreme Rulers: So it is in the Church, So long as there is no

agreement

agreement about One and the same Supreme Representative, under whose Authority we may stand for the present, But one part standeth for it's Authority, another is contrary unto it, or setting up another against it, In this case the matter is clear, there is no compleat *Union* but a fixed *Schism*, or at the best a strong tendency unto it.

A *Third* thing to be eyed is, If so Our *Union* must be under one Supreme Representative, then such ways of Union will do no good as carry not along the Body: An Union if not with the Body, instead of healing, doth widen the Rent. A resolution or desire to unite with a few not caring for the rest, will not produce an union, I mean of the Church, altho it may be of a stronger Party in the Church. These few would possibly as gladly unite as others would have them, if it were not evidently a strengthening of the Breach.

Fourthly, Yet a Part ought to labour with the Body for condescending, as low as warrantably can be, for Peace's sake: Only a Caveat must be here, They are so to deal with the Body to condescend for *Union*, as to beware of making a new Rupture in the Body upon their not granting: For that were in a desperate way to make a new Rent, because others will not take Our way for removing of the Old.

Fifthly, If we desire an hearty cordial *Union*, it would be endeavoured without rubbing upon the Credit. 1. Of Persons. 2. Of Parties. 3. Of Ordinances. If the Credit of all can be held up, it's well. He is no friend to *Union* that would endeavour

vour the contrair: But if some must suffer, Love to the Publick and Zeal for God, will teach That the former is to yeild to the latter, *viz.* Persons to Parties, and the Credit both of Persons and Parties, yea, and of both Parties themselves, if need be, are to stoop for upholding the Authority of Divine Ordinances. A litle of this Self-denial would do much good: But how litle of it is there to be found?

Sixthly, Dividing Principles and such as tend of their own nature to obstruct *Union*, should be abandoned: There is One Principle often spoken of by some, and now made more publick, which if maintained, in Our judgment will close the door upon *Union* in hast, to wit, *That it is unlawful to sit in an Assembly with those, who have enacted persecution against the Godly.* And this in the sence of the Propounders, & as it is expresly, tho injuriously, applyed by them, is as much as to say, It is unlawful to joyn in any Assembly made up for the most part of those who acted in and approved of Our late Controverted Assemblies: Now if it be unlawful to joyn in an Assembly made up for the most part of such, why not also unlawful to join in a Synod or in a Presbytry likewise made up of such, yea and to join at a Communion Table where the most part are such. And indeed some (of the People chiefly) draw out their Principle to this full length. A Principle which (to say no worse of it) striketh at the very throat of Peace; and, if stood to, makes it desperat; and so I hope is, and will be disowned by all who cordially pretend to Peace and *Union* in the Church.

These

These I conceive and many moe should be eyed by Us in Our aiming at *Union*, if we would have Our endeavours effectual: But because a Compleat *Union* in an ordinary way is not to be so soon expected, I shall in the next place give *Two* Directions for managing our Differences; So as the Church of Christ may have less hurt by them at least.

The first Direction is, That we ought to guard against these Tentations, which Our Standing Division may readily make way for, Whereof I shall mention *Three*.

The *First* Tentation is this, An oversight of every other fault almost, whether in Ministers or Professors, providing they be true to the Party. A Party is a dangerous thing, and in nothing more dangerous than in this, That it driveth men, if not all the more tender, to take fidelity unto the Party to be the prime, if not the only χριτηριον and badge of honesty, and enclines them to look on all other things, whether Corrupt Principles, or loose Practices, as excusable Infirmities. A woeful Tentation! and destructive both to Truth and Piety; And therefore ought so much the more to be guarded against on both hands,

A *Second* Tentation is, The secret wishing after, and rejoycing in the Slips one of another. An Evil so woeful that *David* complains to God of it even in his avowed Enemies, *Ps.* 38. 16. *-----When my Foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.* And *Jeremiah* complaineth of it in his false Friends, *Ch.* 20. *v.* 10. They *-----watched for my halting.* And

yet an Evil that even Good men, if once engaged in Parties, will have a Battel with,

A *Third* Tentation upon Our standing Divided, and which is also to be guarded against, is, A bending of Our selves to the outmost of Light, and possibly beyond it, for strengthning of our selves, to the doing of these things, in relation to these who now Rule, which not long since we would have abhorred both in our selves and others. It is very possible that as Gifts blind the Eyes of the Wise, *Exod.* 23. So the seeming advantage unto that which we conceive Truth, may draw out somewhat like an Approbation to such like Work, from those of our own Judgement, and if these do approve, it is the less matter (think we) that others do disapprove: But we ought to remember there are others to sift our Actions: Forreign Churches abroad, our own Conscience, being sober and settled, and above all God the Judge of All.

A *Second* Direction for managing our Differences, is, That we ought not to be so taken up with others as to take our Eye off from guarding against that which is Satan's main design against the Church of Christ at this time. Satan does as a subtile Warriour labour to raise a Mutiny among the Forces which should oppose him, that while they are wrangling one with another, he may carry his Point, without stroke of Sword.

Being to insist a little on this Direction, I shall first speak to what I conceive to be Satan's main design against the Church at this time. 2, I shall give some

some Directions to manage our Differences, So, as not to further this his main design, nor yet to be short-coming in our Duty against it.

And *First*, For taking up what is Satan's great Design, we shall in a word or two lay before you a wonderful Contexture, as it were of God's Wisdom and Satan's Malice, since the first beginnings of the Christian Church even untill now. There is no Truth almost but Satan's Malice hath set it self in some one Age of the Church or other, to bear it down; And God's Wisdom hath still overshot Satan, making use of his Malice in opposing Truth, for the further clearing of that Truth, which he intendeth most to obscure and darken. Satan's first design in the first Ages of the Christian Church was to beat down that great Fundamental Truth of *Christs Divinity*: But after long debate this Truth was fully cleared by the means of several Worthies, whose Spirits the Lord stirred up in these Ages to maintain That so much opposed Truth: Satan therefore being beat off this strong Fort of Christianity retired a little, and laboured next to bear down the Truth of *Christs Humanity*: But the Truth hereof, the more it was opposed, growing the brighter, The Lord making Light break up convincingly in the midst of Hot Debates; Satan retired a little further yet, and bent his whole force in the following Ages against the *Unity of Christs Person*: And next against the *Distinction of his Natures*.

But Satan not prevailing this Way either, he set himself to undermine Christ Jesus in all His Offices.

1. By setting up the Infallibility of Popes and Councils against His Prophetical Office. 2. The Doctrine of Merit in the matter of Justification against His Priestly Office. 3. The Doctrine of Free-will and power of it in Man's Conversion to God, against the Inward part of His Kingly Office. And for the Outward part of it, he set himself to wrest the Scepter of Christ's Government from His own Office-bearers, and put it in the Hands of Popes, Cardinals, Arch-bishops and Bishops. But after long Contest, Truth is now aboundantly cleared and confirmed in all these. Thus, as One saith, the Lord Jesus hath been content to dispute His Ground by Inches with the Devil, until almost He hath beat him out of all; only Satan hath no will to quit it so, it seems to us he is now giving his last and forest On-set; on which in a desperate way he is to venture all; wherein his design is evident, to cast all in a Confusion. First, By trampling under foot the Outward Court of God's House, I mean the Constitution of His Church Visible, by the Doctrine of Renting and *Separation*; And next to deprive the Catholick Church Visible, and all Her considerable Members, of all Government, by the Doctrine of *Independancy*, which confineth the whole Power of the Keys within the narrow circuit of a Particular Congregation; whereby all the Particular Churches are left as so many small Boats in a storm, to dash one against another, having no Intrinsical authoritative Mean to make them steer an even Course without rushing one upon another. Thus Satan aimeth to cast all in confusion,

that

that he may undo all. What in former Ages he could not do in destroying Gospel Truths by Piece-meal and one by one, he intends now to do it by whole sale, and all at once; For if once the bottom of the Ship be split, and the Rudder broken, the precious Ware contain'd in it, can hardly be preserved. Now that Satan's main design is to deface these Truths which are about the Constitution and Government of the Visible Church, that thereby all may be covered with Confusion, appeareth, In that not only the method God hath hitherto keeped, doth point at it; There being few other Points of Truth to clear, but also the thing speaketh for it self, the main speat of the Errors of the time running directly contrary to these; So that certainly, as God intends to clear Truth in these, so it's not the least part of Satan's main design against the Church of Christ at this time to obscure Truth in these.

This then being Satan's design, I shall in the next place give some Directions how to manage our Differences so, as not to further this main design, nor yet be short coming in our Duty against it; Of which Directions I shall reckon *Three.*

First, We ought to examine Opinions and Practices, even tho by us conceived just and lawful, How far they may contribute for furtherance of that Design; and in that respect should be more circumspect and sparing at least in medling with them. Thus the Apostle *Paul Gal.* 2. 3. would not Circumcise *Titus*, tho Circumcision at that time was a thing Lawful, as appears from his Circumcising

of *Timothy*, *Act.* 16. 3. much about the same time, and yet he would not Circumcise *Titus*: The reason is *v.* 4. There were *False Brethren* present; who would have taken advantage of That his Practice, to confirm themselves in their opposition to that Truth, which Satan intended most to bear down at that time; to wit, The freedom of the Christian Church from the yoke of Mosaical Ceremonies: therefore he thinks himself bound to abstain from that practice, tho in it self Lawful, and which in some other cases would have been necessary: And that left by That his Practice he should have been advantageous to Satan's main design against the Church of Christ at that time.

It's true Truth remains still Truth, however Satan abuse it, yet seing all grant that the venting of some Truths at sometimes is unseasonable, and so for that time may be forborn; And seing it would seem that nothing makes a Truth more unseasonable, than when it is known that Satan will make bad use of it, for bearing down that Truth which God intends mainly to clear; It will follow that the venting of such a Truth ought to be at least with great modesty, and much holy Circumspection, if not altogether forborn for that time.

For Application of this Direction, I will not say much: Only I shall propose it to your serious thoughts, Whether or not the late Proceedings in opposition to the Supreme Judicatories of the Church, together with the Tenets whereupon they are grounded (which for Peace's cause, and from unwillingness

neſs to give the leaſt occaſion of Irritation, I forbear to name) whether or not, I ſay, Theſe (even ſuppoſing the Lawfulneſs of the Practices, and Truth of the Opinions) ſeem not to have been unſeaſonable for the time; as being apt to be abuſed for leading People upon the Errors of the time: Such as the Contempt of Eccleſiaſtical Judicatories; Quarrelling the Conſtitution, and Separating from the Fellowſhip of our Church. I fear much it will be hard for People (not acquainted with ſubtile Diſtinctions) to conceive, that any Corruption amongſt thoſe with whom we converſe, can make Civil Fellowſhip with them Unlawful, but it muſt make Church Fellowſhip, eſpecially Communion-table Fellowſhip, with the ſame Perſons, to be as much, if not much more, Unlawful. But I forbear, not being without hopes but that Brethren Gracious and Wiſe will ponder what they hold, and what they practiſe, when they ſee bad uſe made of it, beyond their own Intention and Purpoſe.

There is one thing further I ſhall ſay for application chiefly upon the other hand, and it is this, Such Practices ought to be eſchewed, as may prove unjuſt, and unneceſſary Irritations unto People, to caſt themſelves head-long upon the Errors of the time. I do not love that any thing ſhould be done of purpoſe, to make People (as we ſay) kyth or appear in their colours, I mean, to bring out theſe Practices, the Seed whereof thou conceives to be already within; which at the beſt is to caſt a ſtumbling Block before the Blind. I might reckon ſeveral Practices which

are not only Irritating, but also in themselves Sinful; such as, Promiscuous admissions of Clean and Unclean to the Lord's Table; Little pains taking by Ministers to Instruct People with Knowledge; Shewing much of Passion, but little of Reason, against Errors. There be many whose Zeal is honestly fervent against Error and Confusion, who yet by these, and such as these, are not a little indirectly instrumental to the furtherance of it.

Our *Second* Direction how to manage our Differences so as not to further Satan's main design, is, That all, especially Ministers, would beware of such things as of their own Nature do prove, and by constant observation have proven, Fore-runners of Error and Confusion: Of which I shall reckon *Three*.

The *First* thing to be eschewed, is, Unscriptural Expressions while speaking of things Religious, as, Cases of Conscience, Exercises of Mind, and Scripture Truths: An affected way of bringing forth old Truths in new and uncouth Phrases, high soaring Notions, serving more to astonish than inform the Hearers, *Paul* 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. bids, *Hold fast the form of sound words*, and not only of sound Doctrine: It was *Calvin*'s Observation in his time, and severalls since, that those who coin new Words and strange Expressions, tending only to amuse the Hearers, are in hazard to be carried away themselves, and to carry others with them, unto some New and Dangerous Opinions.

2. Ye must beware lest a disgust of old Truths spread amongst the People, together with an itching after

after new Things, new Opinions, new Cases, new Fellowships, new Teachers. Ye'll find 2 *Tim.* 4. 3, 4. That itching Ears in People go before the turning the Ear from the Truth. For preventing whereof Ministers should be much in the inculcating of old Soul-saving and Soul-humbling Truths; And for keeping these still fresh and savory, much of the need of Christ should be pressed; to a Soul-hungring for Christ, every bitter thing is sweet, but a Soul full of Conceit loatheth the Hony-comb.

A *Third* Thing prediſposing to Error, and so to be guarded against, is, The undervaluing of the Ministry. It hath been Satan's method in drawing on People towards Error at all times, and in no time more than these of late. *First*, To make them despise their Faithful Ministers; that once getting the *Ear* stopped by prejudice against these, he might get the more ready access for his Emissaries to infect them with Damnable Errors. It is the Observation of a Reverend Writer of late, speaking to the same purpose, That the *Galatians* were easily seduced, so soon as they were made to disgust *Paul* their Faithful Teacher.

This much for the *Second Direction* for managing of our Differences so, as not to come short in defence of these Truths, which Satan is labouring most to deface.

Our *Third Direction*, is, To be watchful over the first Buddings of Error That way: There are some lesser Errors whereby Satan scoureth the Field, and maketh way for these great Ones which he mainly intends: Whereof as to the present case I shall mention

tion some. Concerning which, whatever we might speak from our own knowledge of the propensity of severals towards some of them; yet I shall rather choise to speak of them in the abstract, as such, That if People should be taken with them, will make way for that Confusion which Satan mainly aimeth at.

Error 1. The first whereof is, That no Man truly Godly, ought to be Censured for Opinion or Practice, which we conceive he owneth or practiseth from grounds of Conscience, tho his Opinion or Practice tend never so evidently to the Renting of the Church.

Error 2. *Secondly*, That the presence of Scandalous Persons at the Lords Table, defileth the Ordinance unto all who Communicate, knowing such to be there.

Error 3. *Thirdly*, That a Minister Scandalous, tho not Judicially proved such, ceaseth to be a Minister, so that it is unlawful to receive either Word or Sacrament at his hand, or to join in Discipline with him.

Error 4. *Fourthly*, That there is no special tye upon People to countenance the Ordinance, in that Congregation whereof they are Members: But a liberty left to go constantly where they may be most edified, tho with the discouragement of those whose hands they are bound to strengthen.

I have only mentioned these Tenets without Refutation, being confident that none of Christs Ministers, to whom herein I mainly speak, will own them: Only I shall point at *three* things Ministers should

should make conscience of as their Duty, in relation to these or such like.

First, As it is our Duty to watch against prophanity and Scandal upon the one hand, so to be learning where any thing of this kind vents it self either in Practice or Contentious Reasoning.

Secondly, We should not think lightly of such, when they do appear; and that Because, 1. They do evidently make way for Satans great design in these times, which is to cover the Church of Christ with Confusion. 2. Because that however possibly such do not reflect so much upon our own Ministry as upon others, who we may conceive have justly procured their own grief, , yet a year or two may lay them down at the door of him who thinks himself for the time at greatest distance from them, and that with so much the more weight, as that he did not resent these evils sooner. 3. Such would not be thought of lightly, Because Experience sheweth, That the simple overseeing of such, is not the way to root them out, but rather to make them take strength.

And therefore the Third thing that Ministers should make Conscience of in relation to such, is, To set about the Curing of them, wherein ye are to eye two Caveats. 1. As ye would thrive so set about the Cure of One evil as not to neglect Another; They are not to be approven, if any such be, who in their Reproofs bend themselves wholly against Error, but little against Prophanity and Vice; neither are they to be approven, if there be any such, who

pass

pass over the reproof of Error wholly, because the Person to be reproved will hardly take with it; or that prophane men will take occasion to mock at Piety because of it: These things require indeed that the Duty be wisely and tenderly done, but not that it be left altogether undone. A second Caveat to be eyed is, your Cure should be more in Convincing Arguments, than in Bitter Reproofs: Else it will be taken but for the venting of Passion, and that ye have nothing to say in Reason; which will make the Disease worse.

This much for the second branch of our last Use. The *Third* shall be some Considerations to the People, especially, for preventing their stumbling and making Shipwrack upon the present Divisions.

The First Consideration is this: The Church in all Ages hath been afflicted with Divisions from the Apostles time even till now: yea, in the very time when the Apostles were alive themselves, We read *Act.* 15. 39. That two great Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* were so divided, that they parted one from another: The Word made use of in the Original, to express their Contention, signifieth, The high fit of a Fever (*a Paroxism*) It is the very word; The Spirit of the Lord thereby insinuating, That their Contention cast them, as it were, in the rage of a Fever; and yet the matter whereabout the contest fell out was not very great: Much like That, which was the Fountain of our woful Rent, *to wit*, whether *Mark* who had before deserted the Work, should be again employed in it, The one would have him,

him, the other would not; hence they part Company. And what Divisions fell out amongst the primitive Churches almost presently after they were planted by the Apostles, The Epistles of *Paul* to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, &c. make it very clear. And for the times following the History of the Church doth abundantly testify, That from the Apostles Death to this very Age, the Church hath still been shaken with Rents and Schisms, in some one place or other; and these sometimes even amongst the most Gracious Men of those times, as *Augustine*, *Hierom*, *Zuinglius*, *Luther*, and *Calvin*, Together with several others, whose Names, if it were pertinent I might recite. So that ye are not to stumble at the present Divisions: There is no new or strange thing befallen Us: The Church of Christ in all Ages hath been tryed with the like.

A *Second* Consideration to prevent stumbling at our present Divisions is, That God hath foretold Church Divisions should be, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *There must be also Heresies among you*---- And he hath not only foretold that simply they must be, but so as he should have an holy hand in them, *Matth.* 10. 35. *I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother*---- So that he hath an Holy hand in Church Divisions, he permits them to be, and for wise Reasons, whereof I shall reckon *Three.* 1. He permits Divisions to be, That Men's Spirits may be thereby tryed. So 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *There must be Heresies among you*, And wherefore?---*That they which are approved may be made*

made manifest. There is a great deal of evil lurking in Peoples Spirits, Unsound Principles in some, Seeds of loose practices in others, Pride, Conceit, and other unmortified Distempers, in a third sort; and Divisions in a Church decipher those. 2. Divisions are sent for the clearing of Truths: This, as we shewed before, has been Gods method from the beginning, when he had a point of Truth to clear, he hath suffered men to contradict it, and the more it hath been contradicted, it hath still grown the brighter. 3. He permits Divisions to be, that in his Holy Justice they may be a stumbling block to the wicked; If thou think there are so many Opinions, and so many Religions, that thou'l care for no Religion, until wiser People than thou agree among themselves; Then Church Divisions and difference of Opinions in Gods just judgment are thy Destruction.

A third Consideration to prevent stumbling at our present Divisions is, That some good use may be made of them in the mean time; I shall first speak to some Bad Uses of them which ye are to eschew: And then to speak to some Good Uses of them which ye are to seek after.

1. The *First* bad Use of the present Divisions is, From them to take occasion of Rejoycing, that Ministers are set together by the Ears: A woeful Use! Thou rejoycest in that which is the Gospels shame, the Godly's weight, and God's dishonour; and God shall rejoyce in thy shame and ruin another day for it.

2. Ano-

2. Another bad Use is, Because of them to wish That the work of Reformation had never been begun; as having such ills following upon it: An use which the carnal *Israelites* did often make of their present strait, *Would God* say they) *we had never come out of* Egypt. An Use which speaks, That for all thy professed adherence to the work of God and Covenant, yet thou hast never thought upon it as His work; else a blast of Affliction could not have put thee so soon out of love with it.

3. The giving over of your selves to a Spirit of Looseness, it being a lawless time: Some Ministers may possibly make this Use of the present Division, but it is a woeful Use, and such as will deceive: God may of purpose have sent such a time that thou may without fear fill up thy Cup, and so be taken course with afterwards for all together.

4. It is a bad Use of them, to observe only which of the wayes do afford most advantage, where the Sun of Prosperity is most like to shine, that ye may strike in there, but with a resolution, if the Wind change ye will change also: A bad Use and unworthy of a Man, much more of a Christian Man, whose Profession is to be ruled by Conscience, Scripture and Reason; and not by self-interest and advantage.

5. The last bad Use of the present Division is, To blow at the Coal; making it your work what ye can search out and scrape together, from the carriage of these who differ, that ye may vent it, and make them odious by it. A base uncharitable and unchristian Use. A thing so woeful that *David* complains of

of it in his very Enemies, *Ps.* 56. 5, 6. *Every day they wrest my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps when they wait for my Soul.* This is a thing I may say, which hath had it's own hand in the hightning and continuance of our Differences, if that which *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 26.20. be true, as it is most true, ------*Where there is no talebearer the strife ceaseth.*

These now are bad Uses which ye are to eschew, but out of the Eater cometh meat, there is some good Use may be made of our present Divisions, and that ye should seek after.

The first good Use is, That from these separating stirs ye would labour to be convinced of abused *Union.* Our Division speaketh that Union hath not been improven aright, neither amongst Ministers nor Professors, there hath been much of carnal Joy, trifling over of time, but little and too too little of God in our Fellowship: And therefore in His just Judgement He hath given us some other thing to set our Teeth on edge with, ye should be convinced of this, and be humbled for it.

A Second good use of our present Division is, Ye should press so much the more after Peace with God, If strife with men be so wasting and wearisome, what will Gods feud be? If peace with men be so hard to get, seek the more of peace with God: Seek the more of his smileings, the more thou meets with of men's frownings: seek the more warmness in him, the more of Coldness thou meets with

from

from men; seek the more of Counsel and Direction from God, the more Reservedness thou finds in others from whom thou was wont to get sweet Counsel. This were a sweet use of our present Divisions; An Exposition of *Sampsons* Riddle indeed; For thus *Out of the eater should come meat, and out of the bitter should come sweet.*

Thirdly, By these Divisions ye may discover much evil in your spirit that was before undiscovered, what a deal of Pride, not enduring to be opposed? What Carnal Emulation at the good of others? What rejoying at their slips? What eagerness of spirit in the pursuit of things of little worth, when more excellent are neglected? What violent Eruptions of unmortified nature, bending after courses unwarrantable for making of our Point good, except Grace did bear them down? Ye find such a discovery of some things, such as may make you abase your selves before God.

Fourthly, Our present Divisions may confirm us in the Main, and settle us more than ever in the belief of those so much opposed Truths concerning the Government of Christ's House, and Constitution of Visible Churches: and that because those who are divivided and oppose one another much, yet for the most part do agree in these. If a mans house stand after the shaking of many strong winds, he concluds the foundation is good, This is a strong Argument for Truth, that our Divisions Factions and oppositions, one against another, do not shake our minds in relation to it.

Fifthly, Our present Divisions may be a spur to more diligence in dealing with God for helping foreward of his so much retarded Work. He is an unhappy man who, when the Ship of the Church is at the point of shipwrak, will not use violence against his own Lazines, and improve his interest with God, that he would help his tossed Church at a dead lift. Oh! that there were more of this Use; The Generation of those that seek God are fallen asleep: many are the means that God hath used to rouze us up; We have had the Calm Voice of the Word; and that hath not done it; We have had the Thunder-claps of Sad sufferings from without, and that hath not done it: And now the Earth-quakes of heart Divisions within, have shaken All: And, if God prevent not, will overturn All. And if this awake us not, Oh! Lord what will thou do next!

I shall now shut up all with the words of my Text, *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.* I know, as matters now stand, , This, and all we have spoken from it, may prove but thresh-ing on the water, as to the thing by us intended: Yea, and very like it may be made use of for the hightning of prejudices, and further increase of Our strife; and if so be, I am at a point what to Answer: That even this will confirm unto me the Truth of what I have said, to wit, That Our Divisions are an Evil much to be lamented; It is a Judicial stroak, in so far

far as nothing can be said for the removal of it, but thereby one way or other it taketh strength; It is a strong fire, that when water is poured upon it, blazeth up the higher; It is a dangerous Disease in the natural Body, which is so prevalent, as to turn the very medicine applyed, unto the nature of that vicious Humour, whereby the disease is further fed and nouriſhed. And yet tho all this should be (which God avert) I have another thing to say, and it is the ground of my comfort as to Our present sad stroke; That Jesus Christ who hath found out the way to make God and man *One*, when they were at variance, hath ways enough to reconcile us one to another, tho Our Divisions were at a greater hight than yet they're come to: And if he hath pleasure in us he will make us *One*, tho it should be on our own Expenses: He may possibly do it by sending us to one Common Goal, or some such like thing; For our adhering to the Cause of God, Covenant and precious Liberties of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, That precious Trust committed unto us by him, and transmitted unto us by our *Z*ealous and Faithful Predecessors, who in the obtaining and preservation of them, loved not their lives unto the death. If He have pleasure in us he will make us unite, and if no other thing will do it, he will make such like work as this do it: And it's very like such like work may be ere long: For shall we look on our mother Church oppressed and bereaved of these Priviledges which are left unto her by her Lord and husband, in his Latter Will and Testament, and

shall we not so much as in ways competent for us, upon all hazards resent it? Shall stronger Powers usurp upon the Church's Right and in the mean time, shall we by our mutual janglings, encourage them to go on in this woful Work? Or shall we resent these wrongs the less, or secretly approve of them, because possibly that which is our own design for weakning one another is thereby promoved? God forbid. Now the God of Peace establish our Peace with himself, and give us Peace one with another in himself.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

KILWINNING,

Immediatly before the giving of the

COMMUNION.

Being a Preparation Sermon in order thereunto.

The second SERMON.

PSALM 51. 6.

Behold, thou desireſt Truth in the inward Parts: And in the hidden part thou ſhalt make me to know Wiſdom.

THIS Pſalm is one of *Davids* Penitential Pſalms, wherein his Conſcience being firſt awakned, and made ſenſible of his Sin, He pleadeth hard for God's Mercy & Grace, and eſpecially for the Pardon of his Sin; which Petition He inſiſts

upon most, and doth again and again inculcate it.

The Words read in the First Part of this *Verse*, hold out somewhat which God mainly called for, and *David* aimed at, as a necessary Ingredient in his Penitential Address unto God; Without which nothing he could do in any Duty of God's Service, or particularly in This which He is presently about, would have been acceptable to God, and which being obtain'd and in exercise, all He did was the more savoury; and therefore He maketh mention of it in the midst of His Prayer and present Exercise, that thereby He may both mind His Heart, of the great necessity there was to have it, and also may chear up his weighted Spirit somewhat, in confidence that He would be accepted of God in His present Address, seing He had something of that necessary Ingredient, which God doth so much require, desire, and accept of.

The thing it self is expressed by the Word (*Truth*) *Behold thou desirest Truth in the inward parts*, &c. Whereby is not meaned Truth in the Judgement, opposed to Error; nor Truth in People's Words, opposed to the Sin of Lying, and speaking Untruth; But it is *Truth* in the *Heart* and *Affections*, called here *Truth in the inward parts*; In a word, it is the Grace of Sincerity and Singleness of Heart; For so is this Grace often expressed in Scripture, *Isai.* 38. 3. *I have walked before thee in Truth*, (saith *Hezekiah*) *and with a perfect*, upright, or sincere *Heart*. And *Ephes.* 6. 14. *Having their loins girt about with Truth*, &c. That is, with Sincerity and Single-heartedness. This then is

That

That Truth which God requires as a necessary seasoning Ingredient in all Duties, and especially in all Religious Performances; And which *David* here holds out with a *Behold*, as the thing which above any other thing he had aimed at, and yet would aim more at, in his Penitential Address unto God.

We have then in the Words, 1. A Note of Attention (*Behold*) which *David* prefixeth to that which he is to say; I call it a Note of Attention, for that is the use it serveth for in this place, as I shall clear afterwards. 2. There is That which he subjoineth to this (*Behold*) The Lords Complacency and Delight in the Grace of Sincerity, and the Exercise of it, as that without which his Present Address could not be savory or acceptable to God: *Thou desirest Truth in the inward parts.*

I shall observe *Two* things in General before I come to the Particulars of the Text. 1. From this, *David* holds out the Rule he had walked by, and was to walk by for making his Present Address to God, In confessing of Sin, and pleading hard for Pardon, acceptable. Hence take this Doctrine. That it is not enough that we do somewhat of Commanded Duties, but we must labour to do what we do in some measure acceptably: *David* not only confesseth Sin, and pleads for Pardon, but he aims to do it in Truth, that so he may do it Acceptably; For while he saith, *God did desire Truth in the inward parts*, it is evidently implyed that He aimed to have it: There is reason for this; Because, If the thing we do be not done Acceptably and in the Right Manner, though the thing

thing done be never so good in it self, the doing of it is but lost labour unto us: Thus though it was a piece of Commanded Duty under the Old Testament to offer up Sacrifices to God; yet when People made not Conscience to discharge this Duty in the Right Manner, all they did was to as little purpose, as if they had done nothing at all; Hence *Isai.* 1. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord:* &c. Yea, the more excellent any Duty is in it self, and the greater good is to be had by going about any Duty in a Right and Acceptable Manner, the greater is the Hurt and Damnage which we incurr by it, when we advert not how we do it; And when, without taking heed to our Feet, we rush foreward to it, and carry our selves but carelesly in the mean time that we are imployed about it: What more excellent, comfortable, and Soul edifying Ordinance is there than this of a Communion, which through God's Mercy ye have yet the liberty of approaching unto? Is it not a Feast of Fat things? of Wine on the Lees well refined, wherein we Feast with Christ and upon Christ, His broken Body is Meat indeed, the most excellent that Heaven or Earth can afford: And yet (saith *Paul*) If ye come not to this Ordinance in the Right Manner, if ye set not your selves so to go about it as that ye may be accepted in your work, if ye eat or drink unworthily without previous Examination of your selves, *Ye shall eat and drink Damnation and Judgement to your selves*; Not only shall your Table prove a snare, but your meat be turned into poyson; And there-

therefore consider this in the entry, and labour to have it imprinted on your Hearts, That it is not enough to come rushing foreward to your Work not considering how ye come; Your coming ought to be according to the Direction given, *Eccles.* 5. 1. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God*, &c. As at all times, so especially when ye approach unto such a dreadful Ordinance as this is, whereof the advantage is so great, if ye come right, and the hurt and hazard so unspeakably great, if ye come Wrong.

But Secondly observe yet in General, That in going about Commanded Duties in some measure Acceptably, ye ought now and then to reflect upon the Manner and Way of your discharge of Duty, even in the mean time when ye are about it: For so doth *David* Here. He casts an eye upon the Right Manner how He should have prayed, to wit, In Sincerity and Truth, even in the very midst of his prayer, while he saith unto God, *Behold, thou desirest Truth in the inward parts*, And thus Christ in *Luke* 8. 18. saith unto His Disciples, in the very mean time they were Hearing, *Take heed therefore how ye hear*: And surely our Hearts do oft turn formal, vain, wandering and lumpish, or heavy, in the Service of God, because we do not seriously mind how sinful, shameful, and unseemly it is that it should be so: A check of this kind in time, and seasonably, to a vain, straying and wandering Heart, would do much through God's Blessing to make it halt: *David* doth this oft, especially *Psal.* 43. 5. where he turns his speech from God, and gives himself a rebuke

buke and check for the present unsuitable frame of Heart wherein he then was, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul?* (saith he) *And why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God*, &c. So that this reflecting upon the Manner and Way how ye discharge Duty, even in the mean time when ye are about it, is useful: When ye find your Heart out of frame, a serious timous check given unto it, will prove an effectual mean to reclaim it: Besides, if upon your reflecting thus, ye find matters tollerably Right, and your Heart in such a frame for the Main, as the Lord requireth, it will furnish you with matter of boldness, courage, and confidence: as here it doth *David*, who having found somewhat of this Truth and this upright and sincere frame of Heart, in his own *Inward parts*, He takes ground of Confidence from That, to expect that God who had given him This, could also give him more, *In the hidden part* (saith he) *thou shalt make me to know Wisdom.*

For *Use*, This doth shortly speak *two* things. 1. The Service of God is a Work not of the Outward Man only, but also and mainly, of the Inward Man: The Heart and Mind of a Man must be exercised in it, if so he go rightly about it; And that many wayes: And this is One way, The Heart must be exercised by reflecting now and then upon it self, and observing its own present frame and disposition, how it comes up to the Rule prescrived by God, for making what we do in the Service of God Acceptable. And next it speaks the great guilt of many in God's Service, A piece of the Iniquity of our Holy Things, for which

we

we ought to be humbled; That many times when our Tongue is busie our Heart is idle, when our Outward Man is present, the Inward Man is away, and gets liberty to depart from God without check or challenge. This is it that God complains of, *Isai.* 29. 13. ---*This People draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.*

But now I come to the words in particular 1. *David* prefixeth a (Behold) while he is to speak to that which was necessarly required for making his Adress acceptable to God: *Behold* is sometimes a note of Admiration prefixed to such things as are wonderful, as *Isai.* 7, 14. *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son* &c. And so it may be taken here, it is indeed a thing wonderful that God should desire or delight in *Truth in the inward parts*, or that any thing which is in us, or proceeding from us should be lovely to him; There is such a mixture of unlovely sinful dross in every thing of that sort. But we think it doth rather serve here (as often elsewhere) For a note of Attention; Only taking it so, ye must consider that *David*'s design and aim hereby is not so much to stirr up God as his own Heart, and the Hearts of others in whose hands this Piece of Scripture should come, to take heed to the following Purposes.

We shall from this shortly mark *Two* things 1. The Hearts even of the best have need of being stirred up to take heed unto what is the Lords mind concerning the Right and Acceptable Manner in going about

about commanded Duty; For therefore doth *David* see it needful to pluck his own ear (as it were) for making himself more attentive to this Subject, by prefixing a *Behold* a note of Attention unto it, *Behold thou desirest Truth in the inward Parts.* The Truth is, if we get the substance of Duties gone about, we are ordinarly too apt to think that it is but needless scrupulosity, to be anxious about the manner how to do it; So are we in *Prayer*, So are we in Hearing, and so are we also in coming to Communions; when ever occasion is offered, and an outward Call or invitation given us to come, there is none almost but his Conscience will challenge him if he stay aback; But as to the qualifications of the Call, and what is required of you for coming Acceptably, It is a wonder to see with what a careless ear the most part do hear any thing of that sort; as if the Communion were a Charm to work upon People whether they be fitted to Receive it or not; So that Sermons for Preparation do serve (as to many) for no other use, but for a Customary Ceremony, and to fill up so much time. These necessary Directions which are given you to come in the right manner and the warnings you get, telling you how dreadful a thing it is to come Wrong, are minded no longer by the most part, than the mean time they hear them, and by some scarcely so long: Hence certainly it is that the Lord is not so Familiar with the Hearts of People at his Own Feast as sometimes he hath been; It is no wonder, Because we come not as Prepared Guests with a Wedding Gar-

ment

ment to meet with him; Yea doubtless hence it is that the Lord doth threaten so hard to draw his Table, and to suffer men to impose upon us a Dead lifeless formal way of Worship, that therein we may see the Copy of our own Hearts, who if they get the outward form gone about, they care little for the inward Life, Power, and Substance; and surely if ever it come to this, (as God knows how soon it may) that all our Religion shall consist in threed-bare Imposed Forms, and that more pains be taken by Ministers to press upon People the observance of these Forms, than the very Life and substance of Religious Performances, we must justifie the Lord in it, for that is the very Copy of our formal Hearts. Our Love to and resting on Formality may provoke the Lord to wreath the yoke of a Dead, Lifeless and Formal Service on our necks, that we shall not be able to shake it off, though we would. The Lord oftimes shapes out Cross Dispensations in the publick, according to these sinful Distempers which are common and prevalent in the Hearts of People, that therein they may see the unlovely Representation and Idea of their Own Heart *Jer.* 5. 31. He'l suffer even *The Prophets to Prophesy falsly, and the Priests to bear Rule by Their means, If his People love to have it so.*

But *Secondly*, The consideration of this your Dulness and Averseness to hear what is the Lords mind, concerning the Right and Acceptable Manner of going about Commanded Duties, should make you so much the more to stir up your selves, to give diligent heed unto any thing that is spoken to that purpose;

pose; For therefore in order to his own upstirring doth *David* prefix a Note of Attention (*Behold*) to the purpose in hand. 1. Directions of that kind are needful to be given; For (as ye heard) though ye do all that is Commanded, as to the Substance and Matter, yet if ye do it not in the Right Manner, all ye do is to no purpose, as I cleared from *Isaiah* 1. 11. 2 If it be needful that such Directions be given, then it is needful that ye diligently hear them, else ye cannot obey them, ye'l but leave them where ye find them, as oft-times ye do; In which case your Hearing them doth but aggravate your guilt in the neglect of them. 3. Our backwardness and averseness to hear and lay to Heart what is spoken to that purpose; though it be great, yet is not such, but if it be wrestled against and manfully opposed it may be overcome; It is only Our giving way to it without resistance, which makes it strong, importunate and shameless, when our setting our selves seriously and in earnest to wrestle against it, would make it to cede, according to that word, *Jam.* 4. 7. *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.*

I shall not insist on this, only This serves in place of a Preface for stiring you up to hear and lay to Heart what I am to say on the rest of the Text, which holds out the Lords mind (as to one thing at least) concerning the Right and Acceptable Manner of going about Commanded Duties, and especially This Duty which now ye are called to, of approaching to the Lords Table: *The Lord desireth Truth in the Inward Parts.* It's true, not only what ye heard from

the

the former Note, but your own experience at such times doth shew your Hearts are woefully backward to Hear and lay to Heart any thing that is spoken to this purpose; But seeing the thing is needful, and so needful as that all your other pains, without coming up to what ye hear to this purpose, will be to no good purpose: Therefore ye ought to bestir your selves, striving in earnest against your own Backwardness: And if ye seriously set your selves to strive against it, I doubt not but ye will get it overcome, at least in part.

This much for the Note of Attention (*Behold*) I come next to that which is subjoined, to This (Behold) *viz.* The Lords complacency and delight in the Grace of Sincerity, and the exercise of it, As that without which *David's* present Address could not be Savory or Acceptable to God: *Thou desirest Truth in the inward Parts.*

We'l find *Three* things in the Words, For clearing what it is which makes our Performances accepted of God. 1. In general, It is somewhat which God desires, approves, or loves, *Thou desirest*, &c. 2. It is somewhat in the *Inward Parts*, not so much That which is External, and seen by Men, as what is Internal, and known only to God, and the Man's own self. 3. One main particular hereof is condescended on, to wit, *Truth*, the Grace of Sincerity and the Exercise of that Grace, *Thou desirest Truth in the Inward Parts*, Of all which I shall endeavour so to speak, as that therein ye may see both your bypast failings for your Humiliation, and also may see a Rule

to

to which ye ought to Conform your selves for time to come; As in the practise of all Duties, so especially in your Address to God at this time. First then observe, The Rule of going about Commanded Duties Acceptably and in the Right manner is God's approbation: For *David* doth not propose unto himself to follow That which would please his Own Humour, or the Humour of others, but that which God Desires, Loves and Approves of; *Behold* (saith he) *thou desirest Truth*, &c. As if he had said, The thing O Lord which I aim at, is, That which thou Desires and Approves: Thus the Lord saith to *Abraham Gen.* 17. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, He'l have His Approbation (hinted at in the words *Before me*) the Rule of his walking acceptably: This was the Rule which Christ himself when he came unto the World did walk by, *Psal.* 40. 6, 7, 8. *Sacrifice and Offering thou diast not desire--- Then said I: Lo, I come--- I delight to do thy will, O my God*: And there is reason for it, If we consider 1. That God is our main Party to whom we must give an account for all we do; We must give an Account to others also, but he'l reckon with us when all others have done with us. 2. He hath tyed us to this Rule and will reckon with us according to it, *Deut.* 5. 32. *Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you:* You shall not turn aside to the Right hand, or to the Left. And therefore 3. Ye must look mainly to what He approves or disapproves, else all ye do will be to no good purpose, *Matth.* 6. 2. *They do their Alms, that they may have*

Glory

Glory of Men, verily I say unto you, they have their reward. This ought to make you search what is the Rule ye walk by, and to which ye labour to conform your selves most, in your walk: And for your more easie search, I shall point at some who walk not by this Rule.

1. Those walk not by this Rule, who set themselves to come up in their way not to what God desires, but to what the time, and any Party who bears sway in the time, desire: This is the Rule which the Pharisees would have had all in their time to walk by *John.* 7. 48. *Have any of the Rulers* (say they) *or of the Pharisees believed on him?* And it is the Rule that many walk by in all times; they know no other Religion than That of the Times, and which pleaseth Them best who bear the greatest sway; So that if Such should change their way every year once, They will not scruple much to change it as oft. This is the Rule which these did follow whom God doth threaten, *Hos.* 7. 3. *They make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their Lies.* They cared not what they did if so they might please their King and Rulers by it: Such are Time-servers, Men-pleasers, and so cannot be God-pleasers; For (saith *Paul*) *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.*

2. Those walk not by this Rule of God's Approbation and Desire, whose highest design in the point of Duty is, To follow the Example of others; And whose great enquiry is, not so much to know what God Desires, as what others do; and rest upon that

as sufficient that they may do the like: This is the Rule which God forbids to follow, *Exod.* 23. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, &c. And *Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go therein*: And yet it is a Rule which many follow, both as the matter *what*, and the manner *how* they do it: How many are there, that though they want not their own Convictions and Challenges for several things they themselves are conscious of, yet if there be many who are under the Power of the same Evils with themselves, they force themselves to take Peace and hold on, because there are many guilty of the same fault: Alas, That is but a very poor ground of Comfort, To go to Hell with Company, and speaks but very little zeal for God's Honour, else the more thou seest it trampled on by others, thou would be the more tender of it; and consequently the more Common any sin is, thou should hate it the more, because God gets the more Dishonour by it: This was *David's* way, *Rivers of Tears* (saith he) *run down mine Eyes because of the wicked who transgress thy Law.*

3. Those walk not by this Rule, who walk only by that which their own Carnal Wit and Natural Reason approves; How many are they, who though they cannot but know that God in His Word requires more exactness in their Walk, yet they rest on that which they think their own Carnal Wit thinks may suffice; They'll do what they can in Religious Duties, which indeed is but to do what they please; But for further, God must forgive them: Thus they'

they'l medle with what is easie, pleasant, and profitable, in Religion; But for what is hurtful, burthensome, or may bring loss, they'l never owne that; Because their Carnal Reason suggests unto them, that less than that may serve the turn, Religion is good, but People ought not to impoverish or destroy themselves for it: Thus many do easily dispense with themselves for the neglect of all painful Hazards and expensive Duties; such as To deal their Bread to the Hungry, To choose Affliction rather than to sin; Not to recompense evil with evil, but evil with good, To cleave unto Christ and Truth when the wind of Tryal and Persecution blow hard in their face. These and such like Duties are not much stood on by the Man that walks by this Rule of Carnal Reason. As also the Duty of Mortifying your Predominant, Cutting off of the Right Hand, plucking out of the Right Eye, and that painful Duty of Heart-searching, and Self-judging, as at all times, so chiefly when ye are coming to a Communion, Carnal Wit will suggest to you that such precise strictness is not needful. Now this Rule is flatly contrary to that which is here prescribed, The Rule of Gods Approbation: For the *Carnal Mind* is Enmity to God, and *Flesh and Blood* cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. Those walk not by this Rule whose great endeavour is to conform themselves, not so much to what God Desires, as to what they themselves find Peace in, and who if they get not troublesome challenges from Conscience for their way, do take it for granted that their way is good enough, and do

never set themselves to enquire further about it: Now this is an unsure Rule: For 1. Many may have Peace in that which is just opposite to what God Requires and Desires Ye'l see *Deut.* 29. 19. How the Prophane Ruffian cryeth, *Peace, he shall have Peace, though he add Drunkenness to Thirst*: As it were in despite of God. But, 2. Tho' thy Conscience be not thus sear'd, yet it may be sleeping, because thou takes no pains to get it awakened; And if thou wouldst but rouze it up, and make it pass impartial Sentence upon thy Way, There are many things thy Conscience would give thee little rest in, for which now thou finds no check or challenge. 3. It would be considered, whether Conscience now and then do not give you some gentle Checks for many things, tho it wound not sore, because ye do quickly command it to silence, so that it doth not speak to purpose, being overaw'd so that it dare not speak. In either of which Cases, Peace of Mind is not a safe Rule to walk by; For ye may have Peace in that which God approveth not.

I come now to the second thing here expressed, for clearing what That is, that makes our Performances accepted of by God: It is somewhat in the *Inward Parts*, not so much that which is External and obvious to the Eyes of Man, as Internal and only known to God, even the hidden man of the Heart. It's true the man who would walk acceptably, must also look to that which is External, to wit, that which God hath Commanded, according to *Philip.* 4. 8. *Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever*

ever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; If there be any vertue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. So he is not to over-look all things External, or look on them as things indifferent, if they be Honest, Pure, of a good Report, and any vertue in them, he must set about them: Only the great Work of such a man should ly most about his Heart and *Inward Parts*; how to get it brought up to Duty and keeped at Duty: For *John* 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* The Heart is the thing which God doth mainly seek. *My Son* (saith *Solomon*) *Prov.* 23. 26. *Give me thy Heart.* And He doth so seek it, that if he get it not, he cares not for all the rest, *Isa.* 29. 13. *This People draw near me with their Mouth, and with their Lips do Honour Me, but have removed their Heart far from me,* &c.

I might here run out in a sad complaint That the Religion of the times is almost all Out-side-work (at least in very many) who the longer they live make the less ado about the Heart: And is it not so, If when ye neglect the external part of Duty ye get a Challenge, but if that be discharged ye have Peace, though there be no more care about the Heart than if ye had none? But as to your acquitting your selves in this particular of making your great work ly about the Heart and *Inward parts*, Try your selves but by these *Three* things. 1. What is your care to restrain and mortify Heart Sins, which the

Apostle calls the Filthiness of the Spirit, As High conceit of your selves, and your envying of the good of others, because it overshadows you; The Sin of Fretting and repining under cross dispensations; of not reverencing God in, and being contented with your Lott. Try I say what your Cares and Endeavours are to mortify these and such like Heart sins; 2. Try what Conscience ye make to Discharge Inward and spiritual Duties, which require only the Inward man to be acted in them; As the Duty of meditating on God, keeping intercourse and fellowship betwixt your Hearts and Him, The Duty of self judging, and calling your self to an account every night of the days work, the Duty of stooping to God under Cross Dispensations, and constructing aright of every thing that God does. Try I say what Conscience ye make, to discharge those and such like spiritual Duties. 3. Try in what way your greatest Care doth run in these Duties which require both the Outward and Inward man; Is your great Care to act from right motives, and for right ends? or rather do ye not on the contrair take but little care what be the frame of your Heart within, if ye but get the outward work done, and a fair out-side which none can challenge? Is your desire not only to exercise your Tongue in Praying, Your voice and art in Singing Praises, but also and mainly, to exercise your spiritual Graces, your Faith, your Humility, your Love, your Repentance for Sin, and your joy in God? I fear if ye try by these marks, many of us shall find, that though the Inward parts be

that

that which God Desireth most, yet it is that whereof we do give him least, which makes a great part of our Duties to be but shadows of Duty; They have the external draughts and lineaments, shape and proportion of Duty but no more; they are painted Duties, like a painted man without life, a painted fire without heat. Let the tryal of your self in these, and judging of your selves for them, be a part of your *Preparation*: And take this for a further part of it from the same Ground, if ye would have what ye do about your *Preparation*, accepted of by God, let your great work ly about your Heart, how to get it brought to Duty, and wrought up to some good Frame; for the Lord desireth mainly the *Inward parts*; and where your backward, dead, and lumpish Hearts will not move or drive for you, beseech the Lord to draw them, and make them *willing in the day of his Power.*

But now lastly, I come to the particular here condescended on as a necessary Ingredient, for making our performances Acceptable and savoury *viz.* The Grace of Truth and sincerity, *Behold thou desirest Truth in the Inward parts.* And it gives us this Doctrine That the Grace of sincerity and the exercise of it, Is absolutely necessary for making our Duties acceptable to God; It's so necessary that the Lord will accept even very little where it is, when he'l reject much where it is wanting: we'l see both these if we look to the Scripture verdict of two Kings of *Judah*, The first is, *Asa*, He was guilty in many things, there were very visible defects in him

contrary

trary to that which the Law of God required: as particularly, he caused imprison the Prophet who reproved him 2 *Chron.* 16 10, He did not remove the superstitious High places, and yet see what the Spirit of God saith of him 1 *King* 15, 14. *The High places were not removed: nevertheless Asa his Heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* Implying that because he was a sincere upright hearted man, the Lord overlooked his many other failings. So much is also implyed in *Hezekiah*'s Prayer, and the Answer it gets from God 2 *Chron.* 30. 18. 19. *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his Heart to seek God, the Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary, And the Lord hearkned to Hezekiah and healed the People.* The other is King *Amaziah* 2 *Chron.* 25, 2. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect Heart.* Implying that though he did many things which in themselves were Right and Good, yet because his Heart was not single, sincere, and straight, in what he did, the Lord doth not regard it; which cleareth the thing I said before, That the Grace of Sincerity and exercise of it is so necessary, that the Lord will accept even very little where it is, and will reject much where it is wanting.

Now for opening up this Grace of Truth and sincerity a little, in order to the application of the Point: Know 1, Sincerity is a Grace which looketh mainly to the Inside, therefore it is here called *Truth in the Inward parts*: If thou be a Sincere man, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile,

Though

Though a fair outside, may please Onlookers, because they see no further, yet it will not please thee, because thou knows it will not please God, *He desireth Truth in the Inward parts.* But of this already. 2. Sincerity and Truth of Heart makes a man's Tongue and Heart to go together in all his deportment, whether to God or man; The sincere hearted Man is not a double Man, he labours to be that in effect which he gives himself out to be. Thus 1. *John* 3. 18. Truth is opposed to Fair words which are no more but Words; *My little Children* (saith he) *let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth.* Implying where *Word* and *Deed* go not together, there is no singleness, sincerity, or Truth there. 3. Sincerity aims at the right end, and works from right, approven and spiritual motives. The Apostle *Paul Philp:* 1. 15, 16. Puts this difference betwixt the sincere and unsincere man, The Sincere Man works out of love and good will to Christ and Truth, the Unsincere man again works the same Work, and as much of it, but he works out of envy and strife, For some base and by-ends. This Grace of Sincerity and Truth makes a man look not only to the Substance of his Actions, that they be Right and Commanded, but also to the Manner of them, and chiefly that they be from spiritual motives and for a right end, that is, for God's Glory, Thy own Salvation, Thy neighbours good and Edification.

Now for *Use*, Ye would try if there be not much want and inlake of this Truth and Sincerity among Us; It's true every inlake and failing in the exercise of

of Sincerity will not prove a Man to be Unsincere; As every act of Hypocrisie wil not make a Man an Hypocrite if so he do not countenance himself in it; If so he do bewail it and flee to *Jesus Christ* to get pardon for it, and strength to subdue it: It is not for this end I would have you to search and try your Inlakes in the exercise of Sincerity, that ye may give your selves over for Rotten-hearted Hypocrites: But that you may bewail it, take with it, judge your selves for it, flee to Christ to get it pardoned, and to get Grace to amend it; And your making this use of your foul Failings, as to this point, shall be a clear evidence, that though there has been much unsincerity, and shameless Hypocrisie in you, yet ye are no real Hypocrites.

But the main Use of the Point is, That as ye desire to come to the Lords Table Acceptably, and in the Right Manner, so deal with God sincerely and in Truth, that is, Let your great Work ly about your Heart and Inward Parts to get some right frame and disposition put on them, whereof I spoke before; Only an humble, hungring frame, thirsting after Communion and Fellowship with him, is a good frame at such a time. Again let your coming flow from Spiritual Motives, and level at Right and Approven Ends; But especially deal Sincerely and in Truth with God, by labouring to be That indeed, which by your Act of coming to the Communion ye give your selves out for. Now ye give your selves out for many things. 1. Your Coming saith, That ye have need of Christ, and must be at him; And therefore deal

deal sincerely and in Truth with Christ, in searching out and being affected with the need ye have of Him. 2. Your Coming to the Lords Table speaks that ye are weary of your old Masters, and have a real mind to change them; Now I beseech you deal sincerely and in Truth with God, and see it be so that ye are really weary of your old Lusts which formerly enslaved you; And that ye have a mind indeed to quite them. 3. Ye do hereby give out that you have a mind to take God for your Master, to enrol your self in the List of His Soldiers to fight against the Devil, the World, your own Flesh, and every thing which is an Enemy with Him; Deal in Truth and dissemble not with God in this: See ye come not to give God a Day, with a secret purpose to give the Devil an Year. 4. Ye do hereby give out, that you mind to close with Christ on His own Terms; See ye deal sincerely with Him in this also; And for this end, Ponder well and think on the Terms before hand, for if ye close a Bargain with Him on his own terms, and so deal sincerely and in Truth with him; Ye must first take him Freely, For *Come and buy* (saith he) *without money and without price. Isa* 55. 1. And therefore ye must not keep back from Him, or come heartlesly to Him, because ye find no worth in your selves for which ye should be beloved by Him: If ye do so, ye deal not Sincerely and in Truth with Him. 2. If ye take Him on his own Terms, and so deal Sincerely with Him, ye must take him wholly, not only as a Priest to save you, but as a King to Rule in you: If ye mind to make no other use of Christ but to get your by-past Sins

pardoned

pardoned by Him, that ye may take on a new Score in time to come, ye deal not Sincerely and in Truth with Him; ye pretend to take Him on His own Terms, and that is to take Him wholly; And yet ye will not take Him as a King to Rule over you. 3. Ye must take him with all the hazard that may follow upon your taking of Him, ye must take him with a resolution to cleave to him, through Well and through Woe, aswell when the World frowns upon him, as when it smiles, otherwise ye deal not Sincerely with him: For these are his own terms whereon ye pretend to close with him; *If any man* (saith he) *will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me.* And lastly, Ye must take him Irrevocably, for it is an everlasting Covenant: So that if the next day when the sensible Fruits of a Communion do not answer your expectation, ye loose your grip and quite the Bargain, ye do not deal Sincerely and in Truth with Him.

I shall shut up all I have said, by giving some motives for making you deal thus Sincerely and in Truth with him. Know 1. He is dealing Sincerely and in Truth with you; He minds indeed to close a a most blessed Bargain with you, and with all of you who mind to take him at his Word, and to give him Credit; And if ye will but credit him, ye shall find from experience ere long that he hath been sincere, real, and in earnest with you: And to the end ye may trust him, He gives the most speaking evidences of His Real sincerity towards you which can be given: Before ye take a tryal of him, ye have His Word for it,

it, His Writ for it, His Oath for it, and ye shall have His Seal and Pledge of it; Even, that He shall be all that to you which He gives himself out for: So that I may well say, The Lord is dealing Sincerely and in Truth with You, and therefore do ye so with Him. 2. Your dealing thus Sincerely and in Truth with Him, (as I shew'd before) will make him overlook your many other Failings, which otherwise he will take notice of, and reckon on your Account. 3. If ye deal not Sincerely and in Truth with Him now, it is a venture when, or if ever again ye get such another occasion to do that which ye now leave undone. Many of us have often at such times dealt deceitfully with God, our Hearts have not been straight before Him: And yet for all this, he gives us a New Offer, That notwithstanding all that is come or gone, He shall be our God, and we his People; And if ye close with this Offer in Truth, and on his Own Terms, ye shall find him to be forth-coming according to his Offer; But if ye shall slight him, and deal deceitfully with him, seeming to close a Bargain with him when really ye do it not, It is a venture (I say it over again) if ever ye get such another Offer. The shaddows of the Evening, in respect of the bright Sun-shine of Pure Ordinances we have hitherto enjoy'd, seem to be stretched out upon the Land, and our Sun drawing towards a declining; But though that should not be, yet who is there among you can infallibly promise, That he shall ever see another Communion? yea or hear any number of Sermons after this. And therefore while it is to day hear his

Voice

Voice, and harden not your Hearts: Behold *Now*, this very present (*Now*) is the Acceptable time and the day of Salvation; And therefore *Seek the Lord while he may be found, and Call upon him while he is near.*

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

KILWINNING,

MAY 11*th.* 1663.

Upon the Munday immediatly after the Giving of the COMMUNION.

The Third SERMON.

LUKE 7. 23.

And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

Beloved in the Lord,

THAT place 1 *Cor.* 1. 23.---*We Preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block,*--- hath had its accomplishment in all Ages, and in no Age more than in this; *Jesus Christ* and His

His way of working, both with Churches and Particular Souls, hath been a ſtone of ſtumbling and rock of offence to many; yea moe and moe are ſtumbling ſtill, what through one occaſion or other; many who once did ſeem to run well in the way to Heaven, in the way of Truth, and in the way of Piety, have either already taken up, or are in hazard to take up, ſuch an halt, as Chriſt may be conceived to ſay, to thoſe very few who ſeem reſolv'd to follow him through Better and Worſe, as once he ſaid *Joh.* 6. 67. *Unto the twelve* (when many of his Diſciples went back and walked no more with him) *will ye alſo go away*? I have therefore choſen this Text to ſpeak from, now immediatly after having engaged your ſelves to walk in Chriſts Way, that thereby ye may guard againſt that woeful common evil of *Being offended in Chriſt*, or of ſtumbling and taking up an halt in his Way of Truth and Piety, notwithſtanding all the ſtumbling blocks and rocks of offence ye may meet with: For *Bleſſed is he* (ſaith Chriſt) *whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* The Words are a Part of Chriſts Anſwer to that Queſtion propounded to Him by Two of *John*'s Diſciples at *John*'s deſire, *verſe* 20. *-----Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another*? Ye may wonder that *John* who knew Chriſt ſo well, ſhould have moved ſuch a Queſtion: But the Anſwer is, *Firſt*, Tho Souls know Chriſt never ſo well, they'l deſire and have need to know him better, and to get what knowledge they have of him confirmed to them, eſpecially in the day of Trial; For *John* was now in Priſon. And *2dly*. They'l deſire that

others

others may know him also; For it appeareth from what goeth before, that *John* propoundeth this Question for his Disciples satisfaction, and to satisfy their Doubts more than his own.

Christ's Answer hath two Parts. 1. He bids them shew *John* what they saw him doing, *Verse* 22. ----- *Tell John* (saith he) *what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.* If ye ask what makes this to the Answer of the Question; I answer, It maketh much, for it shews he was doing that which Scripture foretold the *Messias* would do, *Isai.* 35. 5, 6. And therefore he behoved to be the *Messias*. 2. In thir words he answereth a main Objection against this Truth taken from Christ's own low condition and the practice of his Followers, which made many bear off him: For they expected a Glorious *Messias*, a Great earthly Monarch; And because Christ was but obscure and mean, therefore they stumbled and were offended in him: To this Christ answereth, ---*Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended* (or scandalized) *in me*. The word rendered here (*offended* or *scandaliz'd*) seems to be a Metaphor taken from Travellers, who having dashed their Foot or Leg at some stone or block in the way, do stumble or take up an halt so as they can go no further, at least advance not so quickly in the way as they did. And *Secondly*, while he sayes *Offended in me*, take this first *Actively*; And so the meaning is, They should not take occasion of stumbling from any thing in Christ or in His Way.

2. It may be taken *Passively*, so as to point out the Way that we should not stumble nor take up an offence in; For there are some wayes, to wit, Every sinful course and way, that it were good for People to stumble in, and turn their backs upon: But this Way wherein we should not stumble, is Christ Himself, and the Way of Truth and Piety prescrib'd by him, *Blessed is he* (saith Christ) *who shall not be offended in me.* As if he had said, Happy is that Man who taketh not occasion from Me, or any thing in My Way, to stumble or turn his back upon Me, and that course of Truth and Piety wherein I have commanded him to walk.

The Words are but One entire Proposition and Sentence, I need not therefore spend time in dividing them; But shall come to the Doctrines.

First, The Lord applyeth the general Prophesies Concerning the *Messias* in the Old Testament to Himself in particular; shewing they were verified in Him; For the Words (*in me*) have in them a direct Answer to the Question propounded by *John*'s Disciples, and shews the *Messias* was come; and that He is That *Messias*. Whence we might mark, That Jesus Christ the Son of *Mary*, who was Born in *Bethlehem*, brought up in *Nazareth*, and Crucified in *Jerusalem*, is that very same *Messias*, who was to Come and promised to the Fathers. We might observe 2*ly*, That before He gave this Answer that He was the promised *Messias* whom they were to follow, and not to stumble at, He doth first prove by Scripture that it was so, while he bids *John*'s Disci-

ples

ples tell their Master, he was doing such miraculous Works as the Scriptures did foreshew none but Christ should do. Whence we might learn, That all Questions and Debates about Religion should be determined from Scripture, and according to the Rule set down in Scripture: For here when a Question ariseth among *John*'s Disciples, If JESUS the Son of *Mary* was the promised *Messias*? neither *John* the Baptist (than whom there was not a Greater Prophet among these that are *Born of Women*) yea nor Christ himself who was Greater than he, do take it upon them to determine in it: But *John* sends them to Christ, and Christ sends them to the Scripture for a Solution. Thus, *To the law and to the testimony* (saith the Lord, *Isa.* 8. 20.) *if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* The neglect of this Rule hath been the In-let to Humane Traditions, without, and contrary to Scripture, both in Worship and Government in the Antichristian Church: And if this Rule once be laid aside, there can be no end of Humane Ceremonies, untill all that trash which is in the Roman Church be brought in upon the Church of God: For if the Authority of a Man can make way for One, it may also make way for all the rest.

But passing those, The *two* following Doctrines are these that I intend most to insist upon, And both of them are implyed. 1. That there are many stumbling Blocks in Christ's way, whereat People are apt to Offend, take up an Halt and stumble. And yet, *Secondly*, There is nothing of that kind which

ought to make us ſtumble: For if there were not ſome ſtumbling Blocks, Chriſt needed not ſo much guard againſt them; and by his guarding againſt them, he ſhews we ſhould not ſtumble at them.

I ſhall proſecute both theſe Poins joyntly: 1. By condiſcending upon ſome of theſe Rocks of Offence from which the *Jews* at firſt, and many ſince, have taken occaſion to ſtumble at Chriſt, to take up an Halt in his Way, and to turn their backs upon it. And 2. By making it evident that there is no ground or reaſon why ye ſhould ſtumble at any of them.

Firſt, The *Jews* ſtumbled at the Meanneſs of Chriſts Perſon. They could never take him, whom they looked on as a Carpenters Son, accompanyed with a Train of poor Fiſher-men, to be their long looked-for Glorious *Meſſias*. And there is a Rock like to this which many yet do break their neck upon and ſtumble at, *to wit*, the Meanneſs of a Miniſtry; Their Spirits cannot digeſt to be reproved, contradicted, and (as they think) trampled upon, by ſilly Bodies: And therefore, they muſt have Miniſters, ſome of them at leaſt, advanced to the higheſt pitch of Wordly Honour; As thinking it will be leſs diſgrace to be controlled, reproved, and made to ſtand in awe by ſuch; which is in effect to ſtumble at the Way which God thinks meeteſt for ſaving Souls; even that his Servants may have but little of outward Worldly Dignity, whereby the Efficacy of their work on Souls may not be imputed to them but to Him, and uſually Gods own Way comes beſt ſpeed, 2 *Cor.* 17. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the mean and afflicted Condition

dition of Christs Ministers, saith---- *We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God and not of us.*

2. The *Jews* stumbled at Christs Doctrine: The Doctrine of Justification by Faith laying hold on Christs Righteousness, *Rom.* 10. 3. *They could not submit themselves unto the Righteousness of God.* And his condemning of the very first Motions of the Heart to Sin; as appears by Christs vindicating the Law from the corrupt Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matth.* 5. 18. &c. Thus the Doctrine of Christ, especially the strictness of it, and that accuracy of Holiness enjoyned by it, is a stumbling Block unto many yet: How many are they who would willingly embrace Christ's Doctrine, so as to profess themselves Christians; But to be so strick laced in your practice as that ye must dye to the World, deny your selves, pluck out the Right Eye, cut off the Right Hand, and so as ye dare not lye, no not for gain, nor Drink to Excess with your Commerads; nor Curse and Damn your selves, no not when ye are in Passion; no, nor avenge your selves with your own hand when ye have gotten a wrong; This they think sounds harsh, and must either have Liberty in things of that kind, otherwise they'l altogether quite It.

3. The *Jews* did stumble at the simplicity of the Gospel and Gospel Ordinances: They could not endure the laying aside of the *Levitical* Ceremonies, which made the Worship of God somewhat glorious to the Carnal Eye, and therefore was that way of

Religion called, *Gal.* 4. 2. 3. *The Rudiments of the World*, and Pedagogy of the Law fitted for the Church while she was in her Infancy; as Rudiments and Pedagogues are for Babes and Children; Now that the *Jews* did stumble at the Way of Christ, because of it's simplicity, and because of the laying aside that outward dress of Mosaical Ceremonies, is clear from the many Disputes which *Paul* hath throughout his Epistles to that purpose. And this hath been frequently a ground of Offence and stumbling to many since, who could not, or cannot think but God is better pleased with his Worship, when its decked up with a number of Humane Ceremonies, that may breed (as they think) Humility and Devotion in the Worshipers, than when it's gone about in that plain simple way wherein Our Lord *Jesus Christ* hath enjoyned it. But this were to make People wiser than God; For if he had thought such things needful, or that they would prove acceptable to him, could he not easily have commanded them; But now he hath not only not commanded, but also forbidden any thing of that kind, *Col.* 2. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World, why, as though living in the World, are ye subject to Ordinances. Touch not, Taste not, Handle not; which all are to perish with the using after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men?* Evidently teaching that the Lord did not abrogate His own Ceremonies under the Old Testament, that men might appoint Theirs under the New. And as to that which is suggested, That Humane Ceremonies added to Worship are a means

to

to quicken Devotion, as the Papists affirm of their Images and Relicts; The Apostle tells us in the following 23 *verse*, *Which things have indeed a shew of Wisdom in Will-worship and Humility*---- They seem to be such, but really are not: It's but *A shew of Wisdom*, Devotion and *Humiluy* which is wrought by any Mean of man's Invention.

4. Men are ready to stumble at Christ and his Way, because of the sinful Infirmities of Instruments and Ministers: Let them, say they, mend their own Faults, and we will mend ours; but as long as Ministers, the best among them, have their own Faults, some Pride, some Avarice, some Worse, Let them reprove our Faults as they please, we will hold on and be doing; For if Sin were as ill as they say it is, would not they themselves be more afraid of it: But herein ye must know that ye stumble at the Wisdom of God: For as ye heard from 2 *Cor*: 4. 7. *We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.* He might have Preached to you by sinless Angels; But this makes more for the Glory of God, when he makes use of Men puzled with a Body of Death like your selves, as an Hammer in his Hand to beat down the Body of Death in others; For we must say in this Case, no Thanks to the Preacher, but unto God.

5. Men are ready to stumble at the Scandalous Out-breakings of others: Especially of those whom Christ hath employed as Instruments for promoting his Kingdom in Peoples Hearts; No doubt this made

many ſtumble at Chriſt and his way, That *Judas* one of his Own Company for Covetouſneſs did ſell his Maſter, and hang'd himſelf afterwards. And indeed ſuch Scandalous ſlips in thoſe do prove dreadful Stumbling-blocks, Firſt, To Profane men, who have no Love to Religion, but lie at a catch to lay hold on any thing whereby they may throw dirt upon it, and here they get the very thing they wiſh: Hence (ſaith Chriſt) *Woe to the World becauſe of Offences*, They think themſelves Happy becauſe of Offences, For they have got that which makes Religion hateful: But our Lord ſaith, *Woe be to them becauſe of Offences*, For they prove ſtumbling-blocks and break-necks to them. Again they prove dreadful ſtumbling blocks to Godly weak ones, whoſe face is thereby covered with ſhame, ſo as they have not the courage to go on in Chriſts Way, and ſet their Face againſt the ſtorm of reproach, and diſgrace, which is raiſed up with ſuch like work: But notwithſtanding, know there is no reaſon to ſtumble at Chriſt or his Way for any thing of that kind: Becauſe 1. He approveth no ſuch Scandalous outbreakings; His Word condemns them in all, and in none more than in his Followers: Becauſe *David* by his fall made the Enemies of God to tranſgreſs, therefore the ſword never departed from his Houſe. 2. He permits ſuch Offences to be, for holy wiſe and juſt Reaſons, or that wicked men may thereby get occaſion, to vent that inward Spite they ſtill carried againſt Religion and Godlineſs; and ſo in Gods holy juſtice be permitted to break their necks upon them.

And

And 3. That all (even the best) may see therein their own weakness before a tentation, and what unspeakable obligations they are under to God, That they are not made examples of humane frailty unto others, as others are to them. And 4ly That all may learn not to have the Persons of men in admiration, to love Truth and cleave unto it, not for the Piety of men who owne it, but from that worth that is in Truth it self: So as that tho the very Ministers themselves who Preach it should run away from it, or by their Scandalous outbreakings thro durt upon it, Yet ye may still adhere to it: In which case, that whereon others stumble and break their neck, should make you advance the faster in your way, and God should bring you *meat out of the eater.*

A 6*th* thing that proves a stumbling block unto many is, Diversity of Opinions: There are so many Religions, and Opinions about Religion, they know not which to follow, let all men once agree among themselves and then thy'l choose, but till then they'l forbear; and so in effect do mock at all Religion. But neither should this be: For in the deep wisdom of God *There must be Heresies--that they which are approved may be made manifest.* 1 *Cor*: 11.19. Besides It lyeth not in the Devils power so to confound matters but that humble seekers of God will find out the right way, He that guides the blind in a way they know not, will lead such: There are proud conceity People, even tho otherwise good, and there are also Careless profane People, that is, Such as look upon all Religion as Policy; who are most like

like among such uncertainties, to lose their way.

7. People are ready to stumble at Christ and his way, Because of the Quality of his followers; It's the Poor receive the Gospel: *John* 7. 48. *Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?* And as Christs Followers are of the poorest sort; So usually the Cross is their Livery *Through many tribulations* (saith Paul) *they must enter the Kingdom of Heaven.* And who is Poor, sickly, tender, despised, mocked at, afflicted in body and mind, if Christs Followers be not? But there is no Reason for stumbling at Christ and his Way for this; And if thou stumble at it, thou stumbles at the wisdom of God, who 1 *Cor.* 1. 27.---*Hath chosen the foolish things of the World, to confound the wise*; *and---the weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty*; *And base things of the World, and things which are despised, hath God chosen*---And as to the Cross they get noe more of it than what is needful for them 1. *Peter* 1, 6---*Though for a season (if need be) ye are in heavenes*---It is needful, and they find it needful; so as many times they will be made to say, they could not want one dram of it; besides that the bitter Cross makes Christ the sweeter to them, and so sweet, as to furnish them with more contentment in their Crossed condition, than a King hath, who swayeth a scepter; *Psalm* 4. 6. *The light of Gods countenance made* David *Glad* &c. To this add, Their Heaven is not here; and the Lord of purpose maketh earth bitter to his followers, that Heaven may be the sweeter when it cometh.

8. Not only common Calamities from God. but bitter

bitter persecutions from men; attend the way of Godliness; and these make many stumble and take up an halt. Christ our Lord *Matth.* 13. 21. Speaks of a sort of men, who *--when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended.* And the experience of all times sheweth that many formerly forward do then faint: Neither want they their pretended Reasons, for they are made to suffer as evil doers; often as disloyal or seditious persons, which to some, makes sufferings more terrible than any other thing. Again, they'l but faint and shame the Truth when they are put to it, and therefore think it better to quite it in time; And how can they be answerable to God, to run the hazard of losing all they have in the World, and to make themselves and posterity Beggars; To this add, what if sufferings should run higher than goods, even to their life? They are not ready to dye, and so they may lose their Souls; besides they yeild but in a little, But quit not all; and therefore it is not wisdom (think they) to be too peremptor, These and such like Reasons make many stumble at Persecution and a suffering Lot, when it attends God's way and those that walk in it; But there is as little cause to stumble at Christ and His Way, at this, as for the rest; For seeing Christ our Lord and Master went to Heaven through a sea of many sad sufferings, why should it be look'd upon as a matter unbeseeming, or a ground of stumbling, that it is with the Servants as it was with their Lord, and with the Disciples as it was with their Master: Christ strives to prevent his

Dis-

Disciples stumbling by the same Reason, *John* 15, 15. Again, a Suffering Lot hath still, when it followed Christ's Fellowers, made Christs Way, the Way of Truth and Piety, a gainer: It hath ever proven so, as might be made appear both from Scripture and Ecclesiastick History: As it was with the Apostle Paul *Philip.* 1. 12. So hath it been, and so it will be, with all Christ's suffering Followers--*I would* (saith he) *Ye should understand---that the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel*: This ever hath, is, and will be, God's none-such Way, wherein none can follow him, to make his Truth, his Work, his Church, his Interests, thrive best when they are born down most: As the Children of *Israel Exod*: 1. 12. Who---*the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew* and therefore to stumble at Christ's way because of Persecution, and a suffering Lot which usually doth attend it, is nothing else but to break our neck upon the deep and infinite wisdome of God; because he takes his own Way, the surest and speediest way, to make his Church to grow; and will not take Ours. Besides all these pretexts and excuses of stumbling on this account may be easily answered: For, tho it hath been the lot of Gods Servants, even when they have suffered for Righteousness, to be suffering in the eye of the World as evil Doers; yet, in that case men must think it enough that they approve themselves unto God; and that there is a day coming when their integrity shall be brought forth as the Light. 1, *Cor*: 4. 3--*with me* (saith the Apo-

Apostle) *it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's Judgment----he that judgeth me is the Lord.* Again none ever suffered that for him which he did suffer for them; He takes nothing from men but what he hath first given unto them, neither puts he them to more than what he doth fit and strengthen them for: It holdeth constantly, *In the mount the Lord will be seen.* And 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you*----And when People are put to the outmost of what can be expected, even to lay down their Lives; what is it but a paying of their debt a little sooner? For once die they must: And tho they should shift the matter at that time, how quickly may God take their life from them another way; possibly in a long lingering and pineing sickness, with greater torment, and a gnawing worm of Conscience besides: and for any loss of goods, Lands, and inheritance, that either People themselves, or others of their Relations may sustain, by cleaving to Christ's Way in a suffering time; It is not to be valued to the loss of God's favour and countenance, which cannot but follow, if men do otherwise; God's peace and Favour, the light of his countenance lifted up, is that Hundred fold, more than houses, brethren, sisters, Children, and Lands, which a man who suffereth the loss of all these things for Christ's sake and the Gospels, shall receive even now in this life: As our Saviour teacheth *Mark.* 10. 29,30. So besides that God hath a thousand ways to make up to men any loss of that kind: at least so far

far, as no man who sets his face towards Heaven, shall want a competency for carrying him there, and when a man's once there, he needs no more: *Matth.* 6. 33.--- *seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* And many things may fall out that may impoverish you, in which ye will neither have that honour nor satisfaction which attends the Christians loss for Christs sake. And tho ceding for a little might put a storm of trouble by; yet he that is not faithful in the little, will never be faithful in that which is more; and it is Satan's Policy at all times to draw out the cause of sufferings to small things; As *Moses*'s Hoof, *Mordecai*'s Beck, and *Daniel*'s opening of his window: In which case, to wit, the case of Confession, even small things become great. From all which it's abundantly clear there is no real Reason why any should stumble at Christ and his Way, because of Persecution, or a suffering lot which usually doth attend it.

But a *Ninth* and Last thing which makes People, ready to stumble at Christ and his Way, and not only at one piece of his way, but the whole bulk of Godliness, and turn perfect Atheists, is, The temporizing temper of Ministers: When, Alas so much the more is our shame! it is usually observed the generality of Ministers (almost of all Countries,) are of that Religion and Way which is most in Credit, and which the sway of the Court runs most for: Thus among Papists, almost all are Papists; In *Sweden* and *Denmark*, almost all are Lutherans: And here with

Us

Us, and in *France* and *Holland*, almost all are Calvinists: And that which increaseth the Scandal and Rock of Offence is, When it is observed they easily turn their Tongues to speak the language of all times, forewardly crying up such a Way the one year, when the Ruling Power is for it, and not only crying it up, but engaging their Credit and Conscience by the most solemn Tyes which can be imagin'd amongst Men to promote it, and pressing, with all the most serious vehemency that Men can use, upon the Lords People to do the like. And yet when times change, and that they perceive the promoting of such a Way doth not make for their Worldly interest, they will cry it as much down again: As if there were no respect to be had, either to God, Conscience, or Credit; but only to Peoples Interest and Standing. Thus in the dayes of *Constantine the Great* a Godly Prince, all the Ministers almost were Orthodox: Again, in his Son *Constantius* his dayes, almost all of them (even the same Men who had been at the Council of *Nice* and condemn'd the *Arian* Heresy) turned *Arians*: Hence it was then said, *Unus Athanasius contra totum mundum.* And as it was in that Age, so hath it been almost ever since, The sway of the Court and Ruling Power of the Times, hath carried with it the generality of Ministers too great a length, to say and unsay, as they did enjoin them. This I grant is indeed a Rock, which of any other hath in it most of Offence, a Rock whereon many a Soul hath made Shipwrack: And if the mighty Power of God did not preserve his own E-

lect

lect, It were a Worlds wonder, if it did not baniſh all ſence of Religion out of the World, making all Fleſh turn Irreligious Atheiſts: But notwithſtanding the Word of the Lord doth furniſh us with ſomething to ſay of this Rock alſo; that there is no reaſon why any ſhould ſtumble at Chriſt's Way for it. And 1. Becauſe both Scripture and Humane Hiſtories do ſhew, That though it hath been ſo almoſt in all times; yet the Lord hath guided the matter ſo, that he hath ſtill keep'd a Church to Himſelf. I have ſhewed ſo much already from Church Hiſtory in *Conſtantine*'s time: And for Scripture Hiſtory, Ye know in *Eliah*'s time, 1 *Kings* 19. 14. The torrent of Defection was ſo prevalent, that for any thing could appear to ſuch a ſagacious Man as *Elijah*, He, and he only, *was left alone.* And *Rev.* 3. 4: There were but a few Names *left in Sardis which had not defiled their Garments* with the Iniquity of the Times. 2. This may alſo contribute to remove ſtumbling, That the Lord, amongſt all the moſt general Defections of Miniſters, hath ever k eeped ſome ſtreight: So as the Way of Truth and Piety is not left without a Witneſs, and ſome encouragement to thoſe that walk in it. In *Achab*'s time there was one *Elias*, yea ſeveral others, tho *Elias* knew not of them: And in *Sardis* there were a *few names* at leaſt, who had *not defiled their Garments.* When the *Arians* ſo far prevailed, that it was ſaid, the whole World groaned and wondred at it ſelf that it became *Arian*, yet there was One *Athanaſius.* And when Antichriſt was to prevail, it is ſhown *Rev.* 11.

3. That

3. That notwithstanding all the Tyranny of Antichrist, and the torrent of Corruption in these times, God should have His *Two*, that is, tho not many, yet some few Witnesses.

3. The Lord in His deep Wisdom doth measure out such a Dispensation for heightning His Churches Tryal, And that these who keep their Garments clean may come forth as Gold. It is but an inconsiderable Tryal, and calls for little Resolution to stand it out, When all the Lord's Ministers speak one thing, lifting up their Voice as a Trumpet, and denouncing the dreadful Judgements of God on all who turn their back on Truth and Piety; But when the generality of Ministers at any time do blow the Trumpet of Defection from the Lord, That speaks Loyalty indeed, If then, notwithstanding such Defection, People stand to the Lords Banner, and in nothing be moved from it: And that because the Trumpet gives an uncertain sound, speaking one thing one day and another thing the next: So that to stumble at Christ's Way because of this when it falleth out, is to stumble at the Wisdom of God.

4. Therefore should no Man stumble at Christ nor His Way for this, because the Lord in all times hath made it, and no doubt will yet make it, tend to the advantage of His Way in the close; So as afterwards, times growing more favourable, the Church of God hath thereby been freed from a Fleece of Time-servers, who would never otherwayes have discovered themselves: Besides that others who through weakness, had turned aside in some degrees

with the torrent of the time, somewhat against their Heart, have been made to acknowledge their weakness to God's Glory: And so make up by their Repentance, the breach they had made on God's Way by their Fall. And consequently for any to stumble at Christ's Way because of This, is to break their neck on that, which in God's method doth make His Way most lovely in the Close.

There are other *Two* Points yet which might be handled jointly as the former; The one Expressed, The other Implyed, and both of them serve to confirm the last, to wit, That whatever we meet with in Christ's Way, we should not love Christ nor His Way the less: None of these things should make us take up an halt in His Way, much less turn our back upon it. For 1. It is an happy thing not to stumble at Christ or His Way: This is expressed in the Text. 2. The Man who is offended in Christ, who turneth his back upon Him because of Stumbling-blocks or Rocks of Offence in the Way, That Man is an unhappy Man and cursed. I might prosecute both these Points, but for the time I shall forbear, and only say something in Answer to a needful Question: I think one may readily ask what I call Christ's Way whereat we should not stumble; For there are Men and Parties of several wayes, There are Papists and Protestants, Sectaries, Socinians, Formalists, Anabaptists, Prelatists or Episcopal-men, Presbyterians, Independents, and *Quakers*, every one whereof have their Own Way about Religion; And no doubt all of them will call their Own Way Christ's Way: And there-

therefore it is needful to know which of these wayes are Christ's Way indeed, that so we may not turn our backs upon it. In Answer to which Question, It cannot be expected (if it were but for the time) I can enter in a Debate concerning what is Right or Wrong, what is Christs, what is not Christs in All those Wayes; I shall therefore only give you some general Directions for finding out what is Christ's Way amidst the tide and torrent of so many contrary Opinions: And these such, that upon the one hand I think there is no Man having his right Wits about him, with the least Grain of Piety, but he must give his Assent unto them; And yet such as through God's Blessing, being rightly improven, shall not leave you without a Guide what to choose as God's Way, and what not.

First then, I doubt not it will be taken for granted by All, That the Way of Christ whereat we should not stumble, are the Essentialls of Piety and Christianity; I mean Faith in Jesus Christ, Repentance unto Life, Holiness and tenderness of Walk in eschewing all known Sin, and coming up to the Practice of all known Duty: This is it I intended mainly all alongs, to wit, That notwithstanding all the forementioned Rocks of Offence, ye would not turn Profligate, Profane, Debauch'd, and Irreligious Atheists; but hold on in the Way of substantial Piety notwithstanding of all, and over the belly of all.

2. But this is not all: It's but a loose way of Religion, and very near to no Religion at all, for a Man to pretend to no more but adhere to the Practice of sub-

ſtantial Duties, and the Faith of Fundamental Truths, while in other things he ſayes and unſays, and rolls about with the times: For hereby they may ſuffer the Devil to do with the moſt part of Scripture what he pleaſes: For Truths abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation are but few, the Lord in Mercy having ſo provided, that the meaneſt capacity may explicitly comprehend them and all of them, ſeing they cannot be ſaved without them: But tho there be ſome few Truths only of abſolute neceſſity for Salvation; yet there are others in their own kind alſo neceſſary, to wit, for Gods Glory and your own Comfort, and the Lord will have you ſticking cloſs by theſe Truths once knowing them to be Truths, as well as by others; and that becauſe a great part of Chriſt's Way lyeth in a Mans adherence even to theſe Truths, to wit, God's Glory and the Mans own Comfort: And a Profane looſe and indifferent Spirit as to theſe, doth both in the nature of the thing and in God's juſt Judgement, beget in progreſs of time, Profane Indifferency and Atheiſm as to other more great and ſubſtantial Truths: So doth the Apoſtle *Paul* inform the *Galatians*, *Ch.* 5. 9. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

Thus then the great Queſtion is to know which is Chriſt's Way in Truths of that ſort, that ſo we may not ſtumble at it: For which in the firſt place take *Paul*'s Rule, *Philipp.* 3 16. *Nevertheleſs whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule.* And 2 *John* 8. *Look to your ſelves that we loſe not theſe things that we have wrought.*--- In a word, whatever

a Man is perſwaded on good grounds to be Chriſt's Way, let him ſtick cloſly by That as his way, and whatever he meet with, beware of doing any thing wherein his own Heart will condemn him. I ſay this, becauſe there are ſome Truths of an inferiour Nature, which are as clearly revealed in Scriptures as other more ſubſtantial Truths: And conſequently a Man may as much be perſwaded of the one as the other: And tho another Man may think, or ſay he is perſwaded of the contrary Error that it is Truth, and be deceived: Yet it follows not that the Man who is perſwaded of Truth to be Truth is deceived likewiſe; There is a Man who in his Dream thinks certainly he is awake and ſpeaking, that Man certainly is deceived: But it were a ſtrange thing to conclude from that, that the Man who is really awake cannot know if he is ſo, but muſt alwayes ſuſpect he may be deceived and in a Dream.

This much then for things out of Doubt, and wherein a Man upon good grounds hath attained to a full perſwaſion of the Truth that is in them. But the greateſt *Queſtion* of all is, concerning Points of the Truth whereof we are not abſolutely perſwaded without ſome ſcruple and ground of Doubt to the contrary, how we may know what is God's Way in thoſe. And for this I ſhall give you ſome Marks. *1ſt.* The Light of Nature will teach us in things Doubtful to encline to the ſureſt and ſafeſt ſide, and that againſt which leaſt can be ſaid: As for Example, in that Controverſy concerning the adding of Sacred ſignificant Ceremonies invented by Man to God's

Worship: As, Bowing to Altars, Kneeling at the Communion, Signing with the Cross at Baptism, &c. Those who plead such Additions to be superstitious and unlawful, do bring *Deut.* 12. 32. *What things soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it,* And such like Scriptures for a Proof. The Patrons of Ceremonies answer, That God forbiddeth such Additions only which are contrary to the Word, but not such as are besides the Word neither forbidden nor commanded by it. Now that is the very Answer which Papists give to Our Protestant Divines, while we use the same Scripture for an Argument against all their superstitious Ceremonies invented by Men: And indeed if that Door be once opened, a Door is opened not only for one or two, but all the Ceremonies of the Church of *Rome*, for on that ground only do they plead for them: When we ask what Warrand have they from Scripture for their frequent Crossings, their use of Salt, Spittle, Exorcisms in Baptism, their use of Holy Water, Baptising of Bells, Pilgrimages, and Pennances? They Answer it is enough of Warrand for the Church to Command them, that they are not expressly condemned in Scripture. Now seing the way that is pleaded for such Ceremonies casts up so wide a gap; It's sure, that to abstain from them altogether, is the safest.

2. That Way in things Doubtful is most like to be Christ's, the Chief Promoters whereof are not carried on with by-ends, self designs to acquire Worldly Honours or Riches, or Fat Benifices to themselves; but

but on the contrary, the very thing they plead for, and that part of the Contradiction which they maintain, is, That nothing of that kind, further than honeſt Compitency, and Miniſterial reſpect, ſhould be beſtowed on Chriſt's Miniſters. And upon the other hand, it is a ſhrewd Preſumption at leaſt that ſuch a Way is not Chriſt's, wherein the Chief Promoters do palpably ſeek themſelves and their own Worldly Intereſts: The Apoſtle *Paul* uſeth to lay great weight on this Mark, eſpecially *Rom.* 16. 18. ----*Such ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly*--- So that if they ſeek their own Bellies they ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And *Philipp.* 3. 18, 19 ----*Many walk*---- *that are the enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt*---- *whoſe God is their belly*---- *who mind earthly things.* If it be evidently ſeen they mind earthly things, They are but *Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt.*

3. When People doubt about ſeveral Wayes which of them is Chriſt's Way, they are to ſtick by that unto which they are moſt engaged, and by more ſolemn tyes obliged, until (at leaſt) they be clearly convinced it is wrong, for very common underſtanding will judge That to be the ſureſt.

4. That way which by the grant of its Adverſaries hath ground in Scripture for it; tho they alſo ſay men may change it, muſt certainly look more like Chriſt's Way than the contrary which is confeſſed by its prime Maintainers to have no ground in Scripture, but that the great Warrand which is given for it, doth ly in the Authority of men. Even an heathen King *Artaxerxes* did know ſo much, that every thing in the Houſe of

God behooved to be done according to the revealed will of God; whence he issueth forth a Decree *Ezra*, 7, 23. *Whatsoever is commaded by the God of Heaven, let it be diligently done, for the house of the the God of heaven: for why should their be wrath against the realm of the King and his Sons?*

Lastly, That which tends most to the promoting of Piety, and is attended most with the Fruits of a Godly life, and tender conversation in it's most eminent mantainers and followers, and this not for a little short flash only at it's first beginning and when it is as it were upon it's Tryals, but at all times when ever there was any Controversie about it, That Way I say looketh most like to Christs Way: For all His Way and every Piece of it tendeth unto That to make People lead a Godly and Holy life *Titus* 2. 11---*The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men: Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present World.* And upon the contrary, That way, whereof the most zealous mantainers and and followers, as to their generality have been still plagued with prophanity and looseness; That way I say looks not like the way of Christ. Wee'l find Christ himself doth lean no small weight on this Mark *Matth.* 7. 15, 16 Where he gives a general rule whereby to try false Prophets and teachers, to wit, The Fruits and Effects which their Doctrine hath upon their own Lives and Conversations *Ye shall know them* (saith he) *by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.* And *verse* 20.

Where-

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Now all these things are such undoubted Truths as none will get them deny'd in the general, and yet such as through Gods Blessing being rightly improven, may give People light in the former Question, To know which is Christ's Way, among the many wayes on foot in the Church of God; so as we need not any further application, but exhort you with the Apostle *Paul* 2 *Tim*: 2. 7. *Consider what* I *say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*

A SERMON PREACHED AT KILWINNING,

Upon the Munday immediatly after the giving of the Communion.

The Fourth SERMON.

ACTS 11. 23.

Who when he came, and had seen the Grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

THE Scope of my Sermon yesterday from *Jeremiah* 3. 22. was to bring you to God: The Text in hand holds out a main Duty ye should make conscience of when ye are brought to him, and have closed with him, as all of you by your approaching to the Lord's Table profess ye have done. Your Duty now is *with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.* I shall not run far back for finding out the Connexion of this Purpose with that which goeth before: Only ye may observe that *Luke* the

the Penman of the Holy Ghost in this History of the *Acts*, doth shew (from *Verse* 19 of this same *Chapter*) how that through occasion of that Persecution which the Church at *Jerusalem* met with after *Steven's* Death (mentioned *Chap.* 8) the Gospel being preached by those who were forced to fly for their lives did wonderfully spread *as far as Phanice, & Cyprus, and Antioch*; And many in these Regions and Kingdoms were taken with it, for *Verse* 21, *The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* Whereupon as is shown *v.* 22. when these tidings came to the Church at *Jerusalem*, *They sent forth Barnabas*, A Man of extraordinary Parts and Calling (for he was an Apostle, as is clear from *Acts* 14. 14.) I say the Church sends him as far as *Antioch*, for helping foreward the Work. And in this *Verse* we have *Barnabas* his coming to them, and what he does when he comes: *Who when he came, and had seen the Grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.*

In which Words we have these things considerable. 1. *Barnabas* his coming to *Antioch*. 2. We have what he saw when he came, He saw the Grace of God, to wit, The wonderful effects of God's Grace, in bringing so many to embrace the Doctrine of the Gospel. 3. We have what this sight did work upon him. 1. It made him *Glad*. 2. It brought a pithy needful exhortation from him to these New Converts, the sum whereof is here set down—*That with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.*

What

What Explication is needful, I shall insist on as I go through the Particulars.

First, It is mentioned he came to *Antioch*. But we hear nothing of any great train he carried along with him, Or any great solemnity at his Reception, tho he was an Apostle the highest Office-bearer in the Church: But only that he came, doubtless in a sober way as became a Minister of Christ: It was a thing then unknown in the World for Church-men to go accompanied with Trains like Princes, and that whole Countrey-sides and greatest Personages in them, behooved to wait upon their Grandeurs. It never was well with the Church of God since Church-men began to overtop Peers and Nobles. But the thing I mark from this is, That *Barnabas* tho an extraordinary Office-bearer in the Church and an Apostle, doth nevertheless obey the Orders of the Church at *Jerusalem*: For it's mentioned *v.* 22. That the Church at *Jerusalem* sent him forth, and here, That he did come accordingly: Now what this Church at *Jerusalem* was, to whose Directions he subjected himself, is clear from *Act.* 21. 18. It was the Church of Elders or Presbyters, even a Presbytry as hath been made out convincingly these years by-past against the *Independants*. To the direction of which Elders, the Apostle *Paul* did submit himself there, as *Barnabas* doth here. From which it is clear, that even the Apostles and extraordinary Office-bearers of the Church were very respective and tender of that Authority which Jesus Christ hath given to His Church and the Judicatories thereof. This appears chiefly in *Two* things.

First

First. When there were Churches constitute and Church Judicatories erected to manage the Discipline of the Church, the Apostles did not exercise power of Jurisdiction over these Churches by themselves alone, neither in the Ordination of Ministers, nor in the Censuring or Excommunicating of Scandalous Offenders, but tho they were without doubt universal Pastors of the whole Church, yet they did remit the same to Ordinary Church Judicatories: Thus *Paul* doth not Ordain *Timothy* to be a Minister alone, but admits the Ordinary Presbytery to do it. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.* And 1 *Cor.* 5. he clearly speaks of the power of Excommunication as residing in the Church Judicatory at *Corinth*, and reproves them for their not making use of that Power in Excommunicating the Incestuous Person, and stirrs them up to their Duty. *V.* 4, 5. That *In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.* V. 5. *To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

A *Second* thing wherein the Apostles did show their respect to Church Judicatories was this which is here mentioned in the Text, That in many things they were ordered by, and subject to their directions: Thus in the place cited *Acts* 21. 20. The Church of Elders or Presbyters at *Jerusalem* give their Injunctions to *Paul* that for removal of an offence

fence that many thousands of Jews had taken against him he should publickly practise some of the Jewish Ceremonies in purifying himself and shaving his head, which were at that time things indifferent: And accordingly it's mentioned v. 26. That *Paul* did follow their direction: All which shews that the Authority of Church Judicatories was very much tendred even by the Apostles themselves. The Bishops do indeed boast themselves to be the Apostles Successors, and their only Successors, I shall not stand upon this, It being made very clear by Protestant writers against the Papists, In the controversy about the Pope, That the Apostles had no Successors, as to what was extraordinary in their Office; and as to that which was Ordinary in it, as to Preach the Word, Dispense the Sacraments, and exercise Church Discipline over particular Churches, That they have in these all Ministers for their Successors: But passing that, What I am now on is, That the Bishops of these latter times have encroached more upon the Power and priviledge left by Christ unto his Church and Church Judicatories, than ever the Apostles themthemselves (whose Successors they give themselves out for) did. For as I have cleared from the present Doctrine, The Apostles did leave the matters of Ordinary Jurisdiction to be managed by Ordinary Church Judicatories; but so do not they, The whole Body of Christ's Ministers within a Church (though they were all gathered together) may neither Ordain a Minister, nor Excommunicate a Scandalous Offender, but this must be done only by

the

the Bishop, and such as he doth Substitute under him for it. Again the Apostles were in some things at least subject and ordered by the Directions of Church Judicatories, but so are not They, such a Condiscendance could not stand with their Honours and Dignities.

Secondly, We have in the Text what *Barnabas* saw among them when he came, and this is called, *The Grace of God*. The meaning whereof is not as if all of them had been converted and indued with saving Grace, neither doth Grace here signify Gods Grace inherent in them, but Gods Grace and free Favour which he saw in the effects of it, in that it wrought so Powerfully in bringing a great many to embrace the Doctrine of the Gospel among whom there (doubtless) were many sincere and real Converts, though all of them were not so. However the thing he saw was, The mighty progress and success of the Gospel; and this occasioned by a strong and cruel Persecution (mentioned verse 19) the Ministers are forced to flee from their Flocks; wherever they go they Preach, Gods Grace and mighty Hand accompanies their Labour to the Conversion of many thousand Souls, this is the *Grace* which *Barnabas* saw.

Hence take this Doctrine, That sadest Persecutions for Truth do frequently prove an occasion of the Gospels spreading: Thus it was *Act.* 8. 3. *Saul---made havock of the Church, entring into every House, and haling Men and Women, committed them to Prison.* v. 4. *Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where Preaching the Word*, Even as far as *Phœnice, Cyprus*

Cyprus and *Antioch*, as it is *ver.* 19. of this *Chapter* The making havock of the Church occasioned the enlargement of the Church, which hath frequently fallen out since, which gave ground to that true and ancient saying, *The Blood of Martyrs is the seed of the Church.*

The Reasons why the Work and Grace of God thrives best at such times may be many. As 1. Peoples Ears are then bored and readiest to drink in the Word with greedinesse, because then they have little other comfort left them: Affliction and Persecution is a Tasty Sawce to make the Word Relish, *Psal.* 141. *v.* 6. *When their Judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words for they are sweet.* 2. At such times the Servants of Christ are more diligent in their Work, as they can have access to it, and more fervent in dealing with God by Prayer for a Blessing to their Work, because the thriving of their Work is all the reward which they can then expect. And 3. The Lord doth then, usually countenance the Labours of his Servants most, because they are most despised, few do then care for them. or takes any notice of them. And therefore the Lord takes this way, both to hearten them and to put respect upon them. And 4. The Couragious, Constant and Cheerful enduring of Hardships and Sufferings for Truth, doth commend that Truth for which they suffer, unto others, even to indifferent Spectators; and makes them enquire after it, and desirous to know what so much worth there can be in it.

I shall not insist for Application, hasting forward to the latter part of the Text, Only if it be so,

so, Then People are not to look upon Persecution and a suffering time for Truth, whenever it comes, as so sad, so dismal, and dreadful a thing, For this at least may be expected to be lovely in it; The same Truth which men labour to bear down, shall spread the faster and the further. And that this is so, the following Doctrine will shew.

Another Doctrine ariseth from the first effect this sight did work on *Barnabas*, It made him *Glad*, for so saith the Text, *Who when he came and had seen the Grace of God was glad.* The Doctrine is this, That the Gospel and Truth do spread, and gain ground among People, is matter of joy and gladness to a Godly heart, though the times were otherwise never so sad: For there were many things to make *Barnabas* sad at this time, If we consider 1. How they had stoned the first Martyr *Stephen* to death, a man full of the Holy Ghost, and used him so as if he had been the most notorious Malefactor that ever the Earth carried. And 2. The prosperous state of the Churches Enemies, the Scribes, Pharisees, High-Priests, a company of degenerate corrupt Church-men, who at that time did sit at *Jerusalem*, guiding all things at their pleasure, That if any did but mutter against their State and Dignity, though in the furthest part of all the Realm, their hand could easily reach them; They needed no more but hound out a *Saul* with a Commission if it were to *Damascus* to take them, and bring them bound to *Jerusalem*. As is clear from *Acts* 9. 1, 2. And 3. if ye consider his own poor condition, and that of others the Ser-

vants of Christ at that time, who were hunted from corner to corner, yea from Kingdom to Kingdom. These, and many such things as these, were at that time to make *Barnabas* sad, and yet this makes him take all in the better part, and in a manner digest all, *That when he came he saw the Grace of God* had accompanied the Labours of his despised Servants, and a rich Income of Souls to the knowledge of Christ and the Gospel. *And when he saw* this, he was *glad*; He is in some sort so transported with it, That in a manner he forgets *Stephen*'s death, he envyeth not the prosperous state of the Churches Enemies, nor doth much resent his Own hard lot, or that of others, who were Christs Faithful Saints and Servants. All which cleareth the Doctrine, That the spreading of Truth will make a Godly Heart *Glad*, though the times otherwise were never so sad. Thus was it with the Apostle *Paul*, *Philip.* 1. 12. *The things which happened unto me.* (saith he meaning his Bonds, Imprisonment and other harsh usage) *have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.* Whereupon v. 18. he breaks out, *What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in Truth, Christ is Preached; and I therein do rejoyce; yea, and will rejoyce.*

For *Use* 1. Try your selves by this, What it is that makes you *Glad*, Is it the thriving of Gods work in Souls? The down-bearing of Sin? The growth of Piety? If so, It speaks thee to be a man of *Barnabas* temper; and upon the other hand, If things of that kind do rather make the sad; and if the back-going of Gods Work, The destroying what he hath built,

built, The plucking up of what he hath planted, The thriving of sin and Wickedness, The general Looseness of the times; If (I say) these things make thee *Glad*; It speaks thee to be a man of a woful temper, a very Godless Heart. But 2. If this be a thing that will make a Godly Heart *Glad*, in the saddest of times, then Pray to God for it; that it may be so, That the Work of God may thrive in Hearts, That those woful Spiritual Plagues of Security, Deadness and Hardness of Heart may be removed, and the Gospel may take many by the Heart who never hitherto knew the Power of it. It's easie for God to bless his Truth in the Mouth of his despised and persecuted Servants, and to make a gracious Change, tho Wickedness were at the greatest hight: And if he do it, whatever may be the other sadness of the Times, thou who art a Godly Heart shall have reason to be *Glad*, yea and thou shall be *Glad*, tho thou were lying bound in a Prison with *Paul*, thou shalt in a manner forget thy Sorrow, and in that thou wilt rejoyce.

But I come now to the 2*d*. Effect which this sight did work in *Barnabas*; It brought a pithy needful Exhortation from him to these new Converts: For saith the Text, ----*When he had seen the Grace of God he was glad and exhorted them all*, &c. I observe first in general that this was the Eirand the *Church of Jerusalem* had sent him on, at least the Chief part of it, and that which he minded most, therefore his discharging this part of his Commission is only mentioned, even his Exhorting of them and Confirming

them, by Preaching to them. Hence this is clear, That Preaching and Exhortation is one part at least of the Ministerial Office, yea and a great part of it: It is such a piece of the Ministers Duty, that both the Converted and Unconverted have need of it, and such need, That in an ordinary way they cannot be saved without it. It's needful to the Unconverted, For *Rom.* 10. 17. ---*Faith cometh by hearing*--- And 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. ---*It pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.* It's needful also to the Converted, as is clear both from this Text (for after he had seen the *Grace of God* among them, He seeth it needful to exhort them) and from *Acts* 14. 21, 22. The Apostle *Paul* did *Confirm* the *Disciples*, and exhorted them *to continue in the Faith*, Exhortation and Preaching even to those that are already Converted, is God's mean to Confirm them. In a word, it will neither be good for the Converted nor Unconverted among us if ever it come to this (as the Lord knoweth how soon it may come) that Preaching shall be looked on as no part, or a very Inconsiderable part of the Ministers Duty, or a thing Indifferent whether he Preach or not, providing ye Read, Sing, or Say a Set Service, which within a little cannot but wear threed-bare to people by frequent Hearing: Alas! how little Food is there in such like work for hungry exercised Souls? How little stuff to rouze up or work upon the dead drouzie secure Conscience? We read in Scripture that Apostles, Evangelists and Ministers, were sent out to preach and to mind that as a great part of their Work, yea and

to

to mind it more than the Administration of the Sacraments, i *Cor.* 1. 17. ---*Christ sent me not to Baptize but to preach the Gospel.*---- That is, not so much to *Baptize* as to *Preach*; But we never find they were sent out to read, say, or sing a *Set Service*, and much less, that they did place the stress of Religion on such a Service, Caring the less, if that were done, whether there had been Preaching or not: Alas! Beloved, when we consider how much plain and powerful Preaching, fervent and Soul-piercing Exhortation hath been in *Britain*, and how little use, the Generality have made of it, and how much they have undervalued it: It were little wonder though liberty to *Preach* were taken from Ministers, or Preaching Ministers removed from People, and such set over them as can do no more than what any School Boy may do, even to read an Homily or old printed Preaching, and to chant over a Service Book.

But I come to the *Exhortation* it self, or rather the sum of what *Barnabas* preached to them: For we may not think he spoke neither more or less than these very words: Doubtless he ran out and enlarged excellently on these Heads; but this was the sum of what he said, *He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* Here we have *Two* things. 1. The thing exhorted to, or what he would have them do, which is *To cleave unto the Lord.* 2. The manner wherein he would have it done *viz. With purpose* or resolution *of heart.*

As to the First, The thing exhorted to, is, *to cleave to the Lord* Jesus *Christ*, who usually gets the Name of

Lord in the New Testament: And the word rendered [*cleave unto him*] signifieth also *continue with him*: Now the Lord to whom he exhorts them to Cleave, or to continue with, is, 1 The *Lord Christ Himself*, who tho Bodily absent, yet is Spiritually present, and as to the Merit, Vertue, and all the Fruits of His Death, is offered to us in the Promise: And the Way how we *cleave to the Lord* thus, is, By Faith, and the continuing in the exercise of that Grace: This is it which is called *Abiding in him*. 1 Joh. 2 6. And *Dwelling in him*. 1. Joh. 4 13. Take this then for the first Piece of this large and comprehensive Duty to which ye are here exhorted, That ye who have fled to Christ by Faith, *Cleave* to *Christ*, and Continue with him, that is, maintain what ye have done in closing with Christ, beware of loosing these grips ye have laid hold on, but frequently renew them, that so ye may cleave the nearer to him.

This is necessary, for 1. Satan will not fail to let showers of Tentations flee at you, to drive you from Him, and make you loose your grips; And surely ye shall be made to loose them, unless you put on a Resolution thus to *cleave unto Him*. 2. This Cleaving to Him, and Abiding in Him, is the cause of fruitfulness, *Joh.* 15. 4, 5. *I am the Vine* (saith Christ) *---he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*: It is little wonder there be but few Fruits after a Communion, because instead of *Cleaving to the Lord*, and mantaining what ye have done in closing with him, and instead of doing it over again, ye do on the contrary upon the least cross Dis-

pensation

penſation begin to queſtion the reality of what ye have done, and to retire as Men aſhamed, becauſe ye have Hoped.

Now that ye may thus maintain what ye have done in Cloſing with the Offer of Chriſt held forth in the Promiſe, and ſo *cleave to the Lord* in the exerciſe of Faith; I ſhall recommend to you theſe *Three* things. 1. Labour to be tender in your Walk; For tenderneſs of Walking is a Fruit of Faith, and the want of it will beget a ſuſpition that ye have no Faith nor ever had it, and if ye ſuſpect ye want Faith ye can have little heart *to cleave to the Lord* by exerciſing it: There is nothing which more obſtructs our Boldneſs in adhering to our Intereſt in Chriſt, and in our *Cleaving* to him by Faith, than Untender Walking. 2. Dwell much in the daily ſence of your Wants, this will put you frequently to employ Him: When People want Water within doors, they muſt of neceſſity run often to the Well with the Bucket to draw, but when ye wear out of acquaintance with your emptineſs and Wants, and think ye have a Fountain and ſufficient ſtock in your ſelves, ye'l make but little uſe of Faith, and ſeldom uſe making of it makes it to decay, that ye cannot make uſe of it when ye would. 3. Do not needleſly and without a ground call in queſtion the reality of your former cloſing with him; For that, as I told you before, will make you heartleſs to ſet to it of new; Or however ye queſtion the reality of what ye have done already, yet ſee that in no terms ye queſtion your Right to cloſe with him by Faith, and believe in him for time to come:

For whatever thou hast done formerly; the Gospel Offer is yet at thy door, and a Command from God unto thee to close with it, and if thou hast not done it in earnest before, thy need is so much the greater to do it frequently and in earnest now.

But now to proceed, By (*the Lord*, to whom he exhorts them to *Cleave*, is not only meaned *The Lord Himself* as he is offered in the Promise, but generally all that he hath recommended to our care, as an evidence of our respect to him, Thus we testify our respect to absent Friends by owning their Concerns and Interests, and if ye ask what these things are that the Lord Christ hath recommended to our care, I answer in *two* words, First, His Truth, and next his Service. So that 1. ye are to Cleave unto, and Continue in his Truth against Error; according to what the Apostle *Jude* commands, *V.* 3: --*Ye should earnestly contend for the Faith*, (to wit, the Doctrine of Faith or Truth) *which was once delivered unto the Saints* 2. We are to Cleave to and Continue in his Service, whether the Duties of Immediate Worship we should cleave to these against Superstition, voluntary neglect, Will-worship and Idolatry: Or the Duties of our Particular Callings and Stations; All which should be gone about as Service to him; So Servants are to do *their service with good will, as to the Lord, and not to men*, *Ephes.* 6. 7. Now that Cleaving to all These is meaned by *Cleaving unto the Lord*, appears from *Deutr.* 10. 20. and 30. 20. where *Cleaving to the Lord* is explained by *fearing the Lord*, by *obeying his voice*, by *serving him* and *swearing by his name*.

Now

Now to speak a little to each of these. 1. Ye must *Cleave* to and continue in his Truth. *Gaius* is commended for this 3 *Joh.* 3. even that *he walked in the Truth*; And *Prov.* 23. 23. we are bidden *Buy the Truth and sell it not*; And ye heared from *Jude*, ---*Ye should contend for the Truth*: For Error contrary to Truth is of a Damning Nature, 2 *Peter* 2. 1. They are called *Damnable Heresies*; And Error in point of Truth makes way for Prophanity and looseness of Life, a sound Heart and an unsound Head cannot well subsist; Therefore doth *Peter* 2 *Epist.* 3. 17. call Error ---*The error of the wicked*,

For helping you to this needful Duty of *Cleaving to the* Lord, by *Cleaving* to His Truth, I shall recommend to you these things. 1. Beware of Scepticism, or making all Truths debateable, or those Truths especially which may bring you in greatest hazard to confess or cleave to: This is down right contrary to the Cleaving to Truth here enjoined. 2. Do not undervalue any Truth, say of no Truth as *Lot* said of *Zoar*, (*is it not a little one?*) and so I may skip from it. It's true there is a difference among Truths, some greater Truths and some smaller; But as it is of Sins, so it is of Errors, The lesser alwise doth make way for the greater, and there is no Truth which cometh not from the God of Truth; And therefore no Truth which ye should look on as a thing Indifferent, whether ye think so or otherwise of it: Besides in times of Defection from Truth, it is the usual Artifice of Persecuters to extenuate those Truths they labour to bear down, as things Indifferent, and very trifles;

When

When in the mean time their own practice doth give their Profession the lie; For if they thought them things indifferent and triffles, why would they persecute Men for adhering to them? Besides tho some Truths be not so absolutely necessary to Salvation, but a Man may be saved tho he think otherwise, yet it doth not follow we should be careless of all such: Thus tho a Man's hand be not so absolutely necessary but he may live without it, yet he were a mad Man who on that account would wittingly and willingly cut it off: Besides an Error in some Truths, which will not damn one, may condemn another who knows at least may easily know it to be an Error, and yet will live and die in the Justification of it without Repentance. 3. Ye ought chiefly to cleave to those Truths which ye are most engaged to owne, either by God's sealing them to your Spirits, or by Catechising and Instructing you from your very Childhood in them, so that ye are put out of all doubt of the Truth that is in them, or by bringing you under most sacred Tyes of Solemn Vows and Oaths to maintain them; I say, ye ought to look upon it as your Duty chiefly to Cleave unto such Truths. 2 *Joh.* 8. *Look to your selves that we lose not those things that we have wrought*; And *Solomon* saith, *It is not safe after vows to make enquiry*. If a Man's Conscience grow once so wide as to let such Truths pass through either for Errors or Triffles, he may perswade himself there is not a Truth in all the Bible, if he be hard put to it, that he'l stick at, but that meeting with a pressing suitable tentation he'l let it slip through after them

4. We are to Cleave to Truth not only by retaining the

the knowledge of it, and by giving assent to it in our Judgements but also by giving a modest and faithful profession and confession of that Truth on all hazards when we are called to it: This is commanded 1 *Pet:* 3. 15. *Be ready alwise to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meakness and fear,* and *Rom:* 10. 10.---- *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* This is necessary both for the honour of God, *Truth* being a piece of his Name which we are bound to confess *Rev:* 2. 13----*Thou holdest fast my name and hast not denyed my faith*--And its necessary also in order to our own Salvation For *whosoever* (saith our Saviour) *will confess me before men, him will I also confess before my father which is in heaven; but whosoever will deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven.* This now as upon the one hand it doth not justify unseasonable Confession contrary to *Matth:* 7. 6----*Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you*; So upon the other hand it reproves those who dar not or will not give a Confession of the Truth even when they are called to it, and much more those who deny the Truth either expressly, or Interpretativly, That is, when they do that which men are apt to take and have reason to take for a denial of the Truth, tho they do not deny it in so many words.

But *Secondly,* We must *cleave unto the Lord* by Cleaving to and continuing in his Service, for that is

is the other thing which he hath recommended to our Care, as an evidence of our respect to him: *Joshua* bids the People, *Take diligent heed----to cleave unto the Lord and serve him*, Jos: 22. 5. Now this holds first of the Ordinances he hath appointed for his Service and Immediate Worship: Ye must Cleave to these. In order to which. 1. Beware of Will-worship, or doing that in his Worship which he hath not commanded, *Colos*, 2. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World: Why as though living in the World, are ye subject to Ordinances?* To wit, Ordinances and Commandments of Men in Gods Service, as he explains verse 22. And he gives some instances of them verse 21. *Touch not, taste not, handle not.* It is true men may appoint the outward Circumstances of Order and Decency for going about these parts of God's Worship which he hath commanded; such as are Time and Place, what hour of the day ye shall meet at publick Worship, and in what Place, and such like, which are Common both to Civil and Religious Actions; but they may not under that pretext, appoint new practices of Worship to God, or significant engaging Ceremonies: As for example, That the Sign of the Cross be used in Baptism, As a Token we shall not hereafter be ashamed to Confess Christ Crucified; And that Ministers Preach with a White Shirt or Surplice above their Garments, to signify the Holiness of their Calling; or as the Ancients did ordain those who were Baptized to wear White Garments for the space of eight dayes after Baptism, To signify their being

being washen from Sin: For by that same Rule, They may command every one to taste Vinegar and Gall at the Communion, as a Sign that they shall not be ashamed of Christ who Died so: And to put on an Helmet, Breast-plate, and other Armour in time of Publick Worship, To signify our Resolution to Fight the Battle against Sin and Satan so long as we live; And suck or drink in Milk publickly in time of Divine Worship, In token that by Faith we draw in the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. Now any may see that to command these and such like, were to appoint New Work in Gods Service, and more than to do that Work he hath appointed Orderly and Decently. Besides many things of Lesser moment and of the same nature with these; I mean significant Ceremonies are appointed by God in his Law, to which there is yet added that Sanction, *Deut.* 12. 32. *What thing soever I command you observe to do it, thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.* So that the appointing any such things in the Worship of God is an adding to Gods Law which is there prohibited.

I shall be more brief in the following Directions for *Cleaving* to the Ordinances of Gods Immediate Worship: And therefore 1. Beware of Irreligious Impiety in neglecting these Ordinances: Ye are commanded to wait upon them, *Pray without ceasing, Despise not Prophesying (or Preaching) Speak to your selves in Psalms and Hymns, Give attendance unto Reading.* Ye cannot *cleave to the Lord* in these Ordinances if ye neglect to go about them; ye must countenance publick

Ordi-

Ordinances, make Conscience of secret Duties. 2. Beware of Formality in going about them, by resting in an out-side work; But above all things, strive to bring the Heart up to them, otherwise ye do not as ye ought, *cleave unto them, God is a Spirit, and will be Worshiped in Spirit and in Truth*, The Lord will not reckon you to *cleave* unto them, tho ye be present at them, if so your Heart be far away from them. 3*dly*. Beware of up-sitting or back-sliding from making Conscience of them, after ye have once begun; That it be not said of you as the Apostle *Paul* said once of the *Galatians*, *Ye have run well, but who did hinder you that ye should not obey the Truth.* Otherwise ye do not cleave unto them.

But further, This *cleaving to the Lord*, by *cleaving* to and Continuing in his Service doth hold in the Duties of our Particular Callings and Stations. And in order to your Cleaving to these, or to the Lord by making Conscience of these, 1. Do not neglect them; I mean those Duties which ye owe, whether as Servants, or as Masters; as Parents, or as Children; as Husbands, or as Wives; as Magistrats, or as Subjects: Much of the Life and Power of Religion is manifested in the Conscientious discharge of such Duties; and a man manifests best what he hath by making Conscience of such; *Rom.* 12. 11. Ye are not to be *Slothful in Business.* 2. What ye do even in things of that kind, strive to do it as Service to the Lord. For (as I have shew'd) so much is enjoyned Servants; Thus shall ye *Cleave to the Lord*, even by going about your Ordinary Calling, when

when ye discharge the Duties thereof as Service to Him, that is, when ye do them because He appoints you so to do, and that ye may adorn Religion, and take away all occasion of Reproach, by your Conscientious Diligence in the practice of them. 3. Let not the Duties of your particular Stations make you neglect the Duties either of Publick or Private Worship, there is time for both, ye cannot *Cleave to the* Lord in the Duties of the one sort, if they shall justle out the Duties of the other. 4. Strive to keep Communion with God even in the practice of such Duties, by sending up secret thoughts and pithy ejaculations to God among hands; as *Nehemiah* did *chap.* 2. By labouring to make a Spiritual use of every thing that occurs, or which ye meet with. This much now for their *cleaving to the* Lord, the thing He would have them to do.

I shall now speak a little only, to the manner wherein the Lord would have it gone about; Its *with a purpose* or resolution, and a *purpose of Heart.* 1. It's with a purpose and resolution, he would have them take on a fixed resolution to do, and that as an help to make them do: Hence take this Doctrine, That ye may *cleave to the* Lord and continue constant and stedfast in his Truth and Service, ye must take on a fixed Resolution and Purpose so to do, I suppose ye have taken on such a Resolution as this at your coming to the Lords Table, but tho ye have done it, yet your wisdom will be every day to renew it: *David* had taken on such a purpose, *Psal.* 17. 3.--*I am purposed that my Mouth shall not transgress*, yea he binds himself by

an

an Oath to it, *Psal.* 119. 106. *I have Sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments* This is that piece of the spiritual armour called *Ephes:* 6. 15----*The preparation of the Gospel of peace.* Even a prepared, ready, resolute purpose in the Lords strength, to go on in the Way of Truth and Duty, notwithstanding of any hazard, hardship, or difficulty, I say it must be a Purpose taken on in the Lords strength, for without him we can do nothing; For sayeth *David Psal:* 71. 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God.*

Now ye must labour to bring up your hearts to such a Resolute Purpose as this, to go on in the Way of Truth and Duty notwithstanding hazard, hardship and difficulty: For 1. The want of such a Resolution or Purpose will not keep off Tryal and trouble, neither will the putting of it on, hasten Tryals. *Job* 34. 33. *Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse or whether thou choose.* 2. Couragious Resolution and *Purpose* to fear no opposition but to charge through all difficulties and hazards, is half victory *Jam:* 4. 7. *Resist the Devil and he will fly from you.* 3. When a Resolution and Purpose is once laid, to undergo all that ye may meet with in the Way of Truth and Duty, it is usually attended with cheerfulness in Duty: Now God loveth a chearful giver, when upon the contrary if an unexpected storm of Tryal and trouble come on a man before he be fully resolved to endure the worst of it, It doth at least very much damp and weaken him, if it do not wholly make him quite the way. 4.

The

The promise is made only to the persevering and Resolved man; *He that endureth to the end shall be saved*, when *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own wayes* (Prov: 14.14.) That is he shall meet with some plague and judgment in his way, which will make him weary of it and be grieved of his undertaking e're all be done, tho this usually comes out of time.

The *Use* is for Reproof to those who are like the *Israelites* in *Elijah*'s time, *halting betwixt two Opinions*, and can never suffer themselves to come to an even-down Resolution and *Purpose* on all hazards to *cleave to the Lord*, to his Truth and his Service, whatever it may stand them; but do either think to put the evil day far from them, by imagining they'l one way or other Shift it: or if they see no probability in this, but that once it will be at their door; yet they keep themselves Irresolute, in an hovering suspense what to do when trouble cometh; Whence so soon as they meet with a tentation, they begin to Capitulate with it, when they should Resolutely repell it, and after a little Capitulating, they'l find out some shift or other to beguile themselves, and so do give up their armes and basely yeild.

Lastly, This *Purpose* and Resolution to *Cleave unto the Lord* must be a *Purpose of the Heart*. It's true every *Purpose* is a *Purpose of Heart* if it be Real; But there are some Purposes which are not Real, but naked Convictions of the judgement, that such and such things should be done, which some are apt to take for a *Purpose of Heart*, when they are only of a

Heart and a Heart, or of a double and deceitful Heart, but not of a single and sincere Heart: ye should therefore labour to be single and sincere in your Purpose and Resolution of *cleaving unto the Lord*, such a *Purpose* as your *Heart* may be engadged in it. For which cause ye must. 1. Forecast what such a Resolution may stand you, otherwise if ye look over that, or look not unto it, your *Purpose* will not be sincere, and ye will not stick by it: and when the thing comes ye looked not for, ye'l do the thing ye thought not: and even that which to think on now would make you say with *Hazael* 2 *Kings* 8. 13. *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* 2. Beware of a mixture of unsincere motives and by-ends: If ye resolve to *cleave to the* Lord either for temporal advantage, or to get a name of Constancy or to eschew the Imputation of Changeableness this will argue Unsincerity in your *Purpose*, and Consequently it will not hold out long: Let your eye therefore be single, in being acted from spiritual motives, love to Christ, love to Truth, so shall your *Purpose* be a *Purpose of Heart* 3. If your *Purpose* to *cleave to the Lord* be sincere and a *Purpose of Heart*, then the whole man, your soul, your body, all the Faculties of the one, and Members of the other, must be ready to follow out their whole *Purpose*. for the heart commands the whole man, your *Purposes* and Resolutions which have nothing of action following, are not *Purposes of the Heart*; as when ye *Purpose to cleave to the* Lord in the mortifying of such a sin, and yet ye have not power to keep from the occasions

casions which lead unto it; ye *Purpose to cleave* to such a Truth, and yet cannot endure to be at the pains to get your selves rooted grounded and established in the Faith and knowledge of it. I say no more but remember the Text, and be exhorted to *cleave unto the Lord*, His Truth, His Ordinances, His Service, *with Purpose of Heart.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 17. Line 1. dele *Wise decree, to permit.* p. 20. l: 7, for, too fair. read, too farr. p. 58. line 7. for, in: r. is. p. 64. l: 18: dele (.) add (;) p: 101. l: 16: r: is to be. p: 113. l: 2: for. Misters r: Ministers. p: 126: l: 25: for I. r: In. p. 131: l: 22: for paomise r: promised. p. 140. for Congation r. Congregation: p: 287. In the Title r. Preached at *Irving.*

5
595
Th

Alcuni